

SEVERAL
ARGUMENTS
FOR
Concessions and Alterations
IN THE
Common Prayer,
AND IN THE
RITES and CEREMONIES
OF THE
Church of England,
IN ORDER TO A
COMPREHENSION.

By a Minister of the CHURCH of ENGLAND,
As by Law Established.

The particular Forms of Divine Worship, and the Rites and Ceremonies appointed to be used therein, being things in their own Nature indifferent, and alterable, and so acknowledged, it is but reasonable upon weighty and important Considerations, according to the various Exigency of Times and Occasions, such Changes and Alterations should be made therein, as to those in Authority should from time to time seem either necessary or expedient. In the Pref. to the Common Prayer.

L O N D O N,
Printed for John Salusbury, at the Rising Sun, near
the Royal Exchange in Cornhil, MDCCLXXXIX.

ARGUMENTS

FOR

IN THE

COURT OF COMMONS

IN THE CASE OF

THE PETITION OF

THE PETITIONERS

FOR THE REPEAL OF

THE ACT IN THAT BEHALF

AND FOR THE REPEAL OF

THE ACT IN THAT BEHALF

THE PREFACE.

GOD hath wrought very graciously, and in an Extraordinary manner, for the deliverance of this Church and State from Popery and Arbitrary Power, in such a way of Peace as other Ages can scarce parallel. But Beneficium postulat Officium, God's great Goodness calls for some suitable return in the way of Love, Thankfulness, and Obedience. And no doubt but the Lord expects some Work that is Great and Excellent; somewhat more than ordinary for the good of that Church, which he hath so wonderfully preserved. And if you would know what we shall render unto the Lord for all his Benefits. What more? What better than for Protestants with one Heart and one Mouth to glorifie God the Father of all our Mercies, and to Worship him with one consent. And oh that the All-wise God would inspire this Great Council of the Nation with Wisdom from above; what, and how to act effectually for this Blessed Union: Which (as Mr. De L' Angle in his Letter to his Lordship, the Bishop of London) will rejoyce Men and Angels, and bring down a Thousand Blessings of Heaven and Earth upon those that shall contribute the most unto it, *Unreas. of Separ. p. 424.* It is to be hoped that the Glory of so Great and Good a Work will

The Preface.

be due to our present Governours next under God. And since we are told in the Preface before the Common Prayer, that in the Reigns of several Princes of Blessed Memory since the Reformation, the Church upon just and weighty Considerations her therunto moving, hath yielded to make such Alterations in some particulars, as in their respective times were thought convenient. Therefore I have added Arguments for such Concessions and Alterations in this Worship, as may be effectual in order to the Desired Union. Though I have had God's Glory for my end, yet I know no Mans Integrity in the Cause of God and of Religion; nor the most unfeigned Desires, and Endeavours for the good and Peace of Church and State, can exempt him from the common fate, that attends things of this Nature, which are sure to be unacceptable with some, if not pass for an unpardonable Offence against the Church of England. If I knew that there were any thing, but Truth and Charity, I would blot it out. If it be possible, and as much as in me lyeth, I would live peaceably with all Men.

The Motives and Inducements to write were these :

First, A Zeal for God. God's Honour is intimately concerned in his Worship. What Soul that hath any sense of God and Religion can bear so much dishonour as is done to God in his Worship? Several casting a contempt upon it by their unbandson Speeches, and ill Examples, prejudiced and prejudicing others against it. Many scarce look upon it as the Worship of God, and mind nothing less than to be devout in it. And since the Worship of God lies under contempt, or a great abuse and unprofitableness in the performance of it, is there not reason to be offended at it. I am not satisfied, and cannot be satisfied without some endeavour to redress the Evil.

Second Motive was a desire to discharge this part of my Ministerial duty to my own, and the Peoples better Edification. Does the World think it is nothing to Ministers, that have a concern for the Peoples Souls to see how little this Worship is done

The Preface.

done to Edifying? How great a guilt lies upon their Congregations upon that very account! Surely guilt enough to lay them low in misery. And the sense of this put me upon another Design, (which was first in my intention) a short piece Argumentative for Conformity to the Prayers. And therein first to satisfy Peoples Consciences in a peaceable Submission and Communion in this Worship, though they do not like every thing in it best. I urge, that they themselves will not suffer their Children and Servants to leave their Worship in their Families, under pretence that anothers is better: But the Governours Authority over the severall Families in the Nation reacheth as far as theirs in their own Family, in all things, Sin only excepted, so far as they may be obeyed without disobeying God: Secondly, To excite them to a Devout use of the Prayers, with some Helps and Directions for their Edification in it. Thirdly, To keep them within the Bounds of Christian Charity, towards those that differ from us; as knowing that without Charity all is nothing worth. Time and Opportunity called for this first, though less studied or accurate, and plain in its Language.

Third Motive was a compassionate Concern for some, who have suffered much by the severity of the Laws, and a desire to prevent their future sufferings. I know there are those, that dissent from this Worship, that would, very heartily would, if their Consciences had been satisfied, have Conformed to it; If they did not, they know they were like to pay for it: But by such Concessions as to take them in, they will be safe for the future from fear of Trouble and Sufferings.

Fourth Motive was a desire to do my part towards the remedying the Evils which have eventually followed the Act for Uniformity. And surely in an Age, that hath smarted so much, as this hath done for Contentions about these Common-Prayers, it concerns every one to put to his helping hand. I shall conclude with a Pathetical and Affectionate Speech of that Reverend Prelate, Dr. Hall, who used to say, War with none but:

The Preface.

but Rome and Hell, and was a true Son of Peace. Bishop Hall's Works, p. 426. "But then, O Lord! How long? How long shall thy poor Church see the Dear Sons of her Womb bleeding about these Apples of Strife? (Speaking of some things in the Common Prayers, Ceremonies especially.) Ye, Men, Brethren, and Fathers help, for Gods sake put to your hands for the quenching of these Common Flames: The one side by Humility and Obedience, the other by Compassion (i. e. to the weak and unsatisfied) both by Prayers and Tears, that so that Passage in His Majesties Declaration may take Effect for Establishing such Laws, as should make a good Agreement between the Church of England, and Protestant Dissenters. May that Agreement be in the Worship of God. The Great God of Heaven, and every True-hearted Protestant say Amen to it.

Arguments

*Arguments for Concessions and Alterations in
the Common-Prayer, and in the Rites and
Ceremonies of the Church of England, in
order to the desired Union in Worship.*

Certainly that man is no friend to Church and State, who is an enemy to their Peace and Union in matters of Religion: For, as the Eminent Mr. *Le Moyn of Holland* saith, in his Letter to his Lordship, the present Bishop of London, at the end of *Unreasonableness of Separation*. In England the good of Church and State depends absolutely upon Union of the People in point of Religion, and one cannot there press an Union too much: For there is never like to be an effectual Reformation of Peoples unreformed Lives without an Union, when Conforming and Nonconforming Ministers may joyn together, encourage, and assist each other in that blessed work. And as to an Union, Mr. *Baxter* in his Life and Death of Sir *Matthew Hale*, saith, p. 19, 20. that the said Judge told him, the only means to heal us was a new Act of Uniformity. Therefore I shall apply my self to the Governours of the Church that are Lawfully called, and have Authority to appoint and alter matters of this nature, respecting the Service and Worship of God. I shall in all Humility recommend to the Governours Consideration some Arguments for Concessions and Alterations in the Common Prayer; and then in the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England: And to shew that I am not alone, and that it is not a project of my own, which hath no countenance or encouragement from others, I shall mention greater Names in favour of the same Argument, and urge their concurrence; and that shall be my first Plea.

First Plea, For some Concessions and Alterations in this Worship, because there are some things which, in the judgment of several eminent Conformists, may be altered without any detriment or dishonour to the Church. Divers Reverend Bishops and Doctors, in a Paper in Print, before the unhappy Wars in King Charles I. Reign, yielded to the laying aside of the Cross, and the making many material Alterations; as the Archbishop of Armagh, the Bishop of Lincoln, Dr. Prideaux, Dr. Ward, Dr. Brownrigg, Dr. Featly, met together by Order of the Lords, at the Bishop of Lincolns in Westminster, (besides some Innovations in Discipline given in) hinted their desire of the Alteration of many things in the Book of Common-Prayer, as the Reading of the Psalms according to the New Translations; Lessons of Canonical Scripture instead of the Apocrypha; leaving out the Hymn of Benedicite, and the saying Gloria Patri after every Psalm; changing with my Body I thee Worship, into these, I give thee Power over my Body; I Absolve thee in the Visitation of the Sick into these, I pronounce thee Absolved, &c. Grand Debate, p. 31.

Again, the Bishop of Armagh, p. 130, 131. from Dr. Barnard, to this effect; That for the healing of those distractions and divisions among Ministers, and others, and the moderating of each extream, in relation to the use of the Liturgy, whereby there might be a return of that wished for Peace and Unity, which of late years we have been strangers to, he conceived some prudent and moderate accommodation might be thought of by wise men, in order to the continuance of the substantial part, each side yielding somewhat after the example of St. Paul, Rom. 14. *Idem*, Directions about the Liturgy; After his Vindication of the Liturgy, yet it cannot be denied but that there are *navi in pulchro corpore*; and as it were to be wished that these were altered, so it were to be done without much noise.

Eix pars. Upon the Ordinance against the Common Prayer, Sect. 4. Our publick Liturgy, or Forms of constant Prayers, must be abolished and not amended in what upon free and publick advice might seem to sober men inconvenient for matter or manner, to which I should easily consent. *Idem*, To the Prince of Wales; In this Church I charge you to persevere, as coming nearest to Gods Word, with some little amendment, &c.

King Charles the Seconds Declaration from Breda, 1660. Since we find some exceptions made against several things in the Liturgy, we will appoint an equal number of Divines, of both persuasions, to review the same, and to make such alterations as shall be

be thought most necessary, and some additional Forms; and it shall be left to the Minister to chuse one or other. In the mean time we desire that Ministers would read those parts, against which there lie no exceptions; yet in compassion to those that scruple it, our will and pleasure is, that none be punished or troubled for not using it, until it be effectually Reformed, as aforesaid.

The Bishop of Corks Protestant Peacemaker, p. 29. What most of the Dissenters would be at, (no Liturgy, no Episcopacy,) may not be, cannot be without Schism; we are ready to sacrifice all we can otherwise to the publick peace and safety. *Idem* p. 33. But notwithstanding what I have said of the excellency, both of the Common-Prayers, and of Cathedral Performances, I do not conceive the alteration of an Expression, or here and there of a whole Prayer or two by Law, or dispensing with some Ceremonies; I do not conceive, such relaxation as this would break the Harmony and Beauty of our Worship, or disturb the Union and Peace of our Church. There are some Collects, and perhaps Rubricks too, which with all duty and submission, I humbly conceive might be altered for the better. Page 118, 119.

Mr. Hales in his Tract of Schism, p. 215. Propounds it as a remedy to prevent Schism, to have all Liturgies, and publick Forms of Service so framed, as that they admit not of particular and private fancies, but contain only such things in which all Christians do agree: Prayer, Confession, Thanksgiving, Reading of Scriptures in the most plain and simple manner, were matter enough to furnish out a sufficient Liturgy, though nothing either of private Opinion, or of Church Pomp, of Garments, or prescribed Gestures, of Imagery, or Musick, of matter concerning the Dead, of many superfluities, which creep into the Church under the names of Order and Decency, did interpose it self.

The great Dean of *St. Pauls* in the *Unreasonableness of Separation*, Pref. About the Book of Common-Prayer, it ought to be considered, whether for satisfaction of the scrupulous, some more doubtful and obscure passages may not yet be explained, or amended? Whether the new Translation of the *Psalms* were not fitter to be used, especially in *Parochial Churches*? Whether portions of *Canonical Scripture* were not better put instead of *Apocrypha Lessons*? Whether the Rubrick about the *Salvation of Infants* might not be restored to its former place, in the Office of *Confirmation*, and so the present excep-

ous against it be removed? Whether those Expressions which suppose the strict exercise of Discipline in *Burying the Dead* were not better left at *Liberty* in our present case? Such a review made by Wise and Peaceable Men; nor given to wrath and disputing, may be so far from being a dishonour to this Church, that it may add to the glory of it. — And whether using the Liturgy, and Approbation and Promise of the use of it, may not be sufficient instead of the late Form of declaring their Assent and Consent, which hath been so much scrupled by our Brethren?

The State of the Primitive Church, p. 23. Now in Christ I humbly beseech the Governours of the Church, calmly to consider, were it not better to have such a Form of Service as would satisfy most. The Fathers of our Church when they Reformed this Nation from Popery, were desirous to fetch off as many as they could, retaining for this cause all the Ceremonies and Forms of Prayer they could, with a good rectified Conscience. Some other things I could mention in the Book of Common Prayer (though not all in themselves) yet fit to be altered; and would obviously appear to every wise man, once resolved to compose such a Form as to take in most of this Nation; which I humbly conceive Governours should in Conscience endeavour, becoming all things to all men to gain some, though not all, yet happily gain all in process of time.

Principles and Practices of Moderate Divines, &c. They would be very glad, if some things that most offend were taken out of the way, particularly, that there might be no expressions in our Forms of Prayer, that contain disputable and uncertain Doctrines, p. 339. *Rev. Mr. Wake's Sermon on Rom. 13. 5, 7*, p. 25. And that no such weight be laid on lesser things, as that they should be insisted on to the endangering those of a higher nature, and hazarding the Churches Prosperity and Peace.

Serious and Compassionate Enquiry into the causes, &c. That it will be no Hypocritical Conversation, no wrong either to our Religion, or our Consciences. If when the case so requires it, we change any phrase of Speech, how fit soever in our apprehension, for one less fit, but more acceptable and current; or any Rite or Ceremony that we have great kindness for, for one that is more grateful unto others, and that according to the laying of the Lord *Bacon*, we learn of the elder times what is lawful, and of the present what is fittest.

Mr. De L'Angles Letter to his Lordship, the present B. of London; I am sure,

sure, that if there were nothing wanting to cure your Divisions, but the obtaining from some Exceptions, that relating to some Ceremonies, and the changing of the colour of some Habits, you would resolve to do that, and something more difficult than that, with great pleasure.

Conformists Plea for the Nonconformists, Part 3. Pref. It is clear there must be a Liturgy, and very many, even to Dr. Sherlock, mention some Alterations in the several parts of it, as desirable and advisable. Without any positive arrogancy in a matter of this nature, I do offer my observation to some that expect much profit by Preaching, do think first and second Service too long and tiresome. Others that care less for Preaching, are very busie in the Interlocutory parts of the Service, grow careless, and too often prate, and stare about and whisper in the Lessons, and sleep under our Sermons; both are too long for themselves. All that I will suggest in the list of faults, First, That the second Service or Communion Service, may be then only read, when there is a Communion, or when there is no Sermon [upon Holy days]. Secondly, That only one of the three Creeds be used at one time, in the same Service. Thirdly, That the too often Repetitions of the Lords Prayer in the same Service may be limited. All cannot, most do not keep Curats. The work of Reading the ordinary first and second Service, besides incidental Offices, as Baptism, Churchings, &c. make it very expensive to most mens Strength and Spirit, and wearisome to the People, and the constant necessary work of Preaching and Catechising is hardly endured by the young and healthful, but impossible to be performed by the infirm and aged. [And therefore in King Edward VI. days, some Ministers were dispensed with in not Reading the whole, as *Grand Debate* mentions, p. 15.] It is true indeed if a mans Conscience will bear it, a Minister may be both short and seldom in the Pulpit; but then it is with two great hazards. First, Of losing his Auditory, or of his Auditories great loss to their Souls. This humble Proposal for omitting the second Service, hath a fair Countenance from the Rubricks; Rubrick the last, immediately before the Lords Prayer hath a supposition that the Communion is Celebrated every Lords day, &c. I mean to conclude with an excellent Citation from Bishop Taylor, *Dult. Dult.* p. 375. In Rituals and Ceremonies, and little circumstances of Ecclesiastical Offices, and Forts of Worship, in the punctualities of Rubricks, in the order of Collects, in the number of Prayers, and fulness of the Office upon a reasonable cause, or inducement

ment to the omission or alteration ; these things are so little, and fit to be entrusted to the conduct of those sober, obedient, and grave persons, who are thought fit to be entrusted with the Cure of Souls :

“ And things of such little concernment are so apt to yield to any
 “ wise mans reasons, and sudden occasions, and accidents, and little
 “ and great Causes, that these were the fittest instances of this Rule
 “ (i. e. of Latitude) if Superiours would not make too much of little
 “ things. All just Governments give the largest interpretation to
 “ Churches Orders in these things, to persons of a peaceable Mind
 “ and obedient Spirit, that such circumstances may not pass into a
 “ solemn Religion ; and the Zeal of good Men, their Caution and
 “ Curiosity may not be spent in that which doth not profit. In many
 “ cases a Latitude according to Equity may be presumed ; but if it
 “ be expressly denied it may not be used : Which is the case of our Con-
 “ formists as to those things, wherein a Latitude might be taken accord-
 “ ing to the Law of Equity, when they carry some considerable incon-
 “ venience along with them, and reason for the contrary ; yet we be-
 “ ing strictly bound up by the Church, it must bring a guilt upon the
 “ persons, disturb their peace of Conscience, and prove vexatious and
 “ troublesome to them that way, if they often offend in these matters.
 “ And this I presume to be the case of those, who in their common pra-
 “ ctice do not come up to the strictness of their bounden and promised
 “ Conformity, though in some cases, when *extra casum scandali &*
contemptus, they may do otherwise than the express Letter of the
 “ Law requires, and be guiltless, as our Casuists affirm.

I beg the favour with all Humility, and with Submission to the Will and Wisdom of our Governours, to offer to their Consideration ; whether it were not desirable to have a Prayer for particular Graces in the Evening Service, (the Petitioning part being less perfect then) and at such times when the Letany is not used. We have such a Prayer in the *Whole Duty of Man*, called a Prayer for Grace, comprehensive of particular Graces. And then no doubt the use of it would be more acceptable in Families than it is now, when it runs out so much in Intercessions, and so little in Petition.

Again I offer to their Consideration ; whether the Hymns and Offices of Praise after the Lessons, (especially in the Evening Service) are not become less edifying in their present use, where those Spiritual Songs are barely Read, (as in Parish Churches) and not Sung ; *there being one way of Singing*, or an Harmonious Reading of them.

them useful and edifying, though another way not so much to Edification, because but few understand it in the way of an Anthem. There are some things of particular respect to the Virgin Mary, and good Old Symeon, not so suitable to the Congregation. Whither the Wisdom of our Governours may not see reason to forbear those Anthems wholly in *Parish Churches*, or to leave the use of them indifferent, or limit them *pro hic & nunc*, according as times of Joy and Victory require our Praise, or other times of Humiliation to forbear them.

One thing more I beg leave to offer; If our Governours see reason to alter any thing in the Baptismal Office, about the sign of the Cross, Sureties, or elsewhere; whether it were not desirable to have some such Scriptures inserted, as *Job 25. 4. 14. 4. How can he be clean that is born of a Woman: Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean*; that Parents may see their Childrens Condition since the fall, defil'd with Sin, polluted and unclean; and so their great need of the Grace of Baptism, to be washed and cleansed through the Blood of Christ from their Natural pollution and defilement by Sin. If this were but clearly expressed, and well understood, as it would be one of the strongest Arguments for Infant Baptism from their Childrens need of the Baptismal Grace, so it would be a good preservative against Anabaptism.

And as to the General Thanksgiving, perhaps it were to be desired, that to the Redemption by Jesus Christ, and the Means of Grace, were added, and for the Spirit of Grace sanctifying an Holy Catholick Church, and for the Forgiveness of Sins which we believe and hope for, and the Resurrection of the Body unto Eternal Life. Some have thought our Thanksgiving too general, in that there is no mention made in it of Sanctification. If any of these things approve it self unto our Governours, my Labour is not lost. Out of this variety I doubt not, but that their Wisdom knows what to chuse, as shall be most for God's Glory, and the Churches Edification.

II. *Arg.* For Concessions and Alterations in the *Common Prayer*, because that Worship according to the Acts for Uniformity, or the exceeding strictness of the Enjoyn'd Conformity to it, hath been occasionally, or at least eventually Evil.

First, In respect of our Unchristian Divisions and Separation. Those that dislike this Worship, (as there have been such from the Divisions in Queen *Maries* dayes, at *Frankford*) and refuse to joyn in

it, whether do they usually betake themselves but to separating, and setting up another Worship? Even those that will joyn with the Minister in his own Prayers, and his Sermon; yet separate from the Common Prayers above any other Worship. Hence are so many Sects and Opinions among us, that our Nation is scandalous upon that account among other Protestants, who have a common saying, *Half England is not of the Church of England.* Good God! What would become of Peace and Union, Love and Charity, if the next Age should be as fruitful of Sects and Parties, and differ in their Modes of Worship, as much, as the present hath done, wherein thy Church hath been so miserably divided? How long, O Lord, the Author of Peace, and Lover of Concord, wilt thou suffer such Confusion in the Churches of the Saints.

2. This Worship, with the *Penal Laws* Ecclesiastical and Civil, that enforced the Act for *Uniformity*, hath been occasionally, or at least eventually evil, by bringing hard suffering upon the contrary-minded. Many formerly chose rather to leave their Native Country, and shelter themselves in *New-England*, than endure the Severities then, and Conventions before the High Commission Court. And if I should speak of the Presentments and Excommunications, the Fining, Imprisoning, and Confinement from Corporations in latter years, it would be no more pleasing to some to hear of them, than it was to others to suffer them. Ah how harsh did these things sound in the Ears of Merciful Men, and the Reformed Churches abroad, that Protestants should be worrying one another, biting and devouring one another, and doing the Enemies work for him, who scornfully rejoiced at it, and used to say, Give the Hereticks Rope enough; and they would hang themselves. But Blessed be God who hath taken away the occasion of these Evils, and done that effectually by the present Parliament which the Preceeding would have done, as we are informed in the Memorial from the *English* Protestants to His Highness the Prince of *Orange*, p. 28. Four of our Succeeding Parliaments perceived the abuse of these *Penal Laws*, and the mischief thereby to Conscience Christians; and declared their intention of relieving them, if the King would have permitted them, yet they endeavoured to stop the Execution of them, and desired a Settlement of Liberty of Conscience as is due to Christians. Adieu now to these Presentments, Fines, Imprisonments, Excommunications; Troubling the Peace of our Neighbours; and too often it hath been our peaceable Neighbours;

bours ; though I am apt to think but few have suffered comparatively with the many that escaped, yet those that suffered, were too many, and to be pitied ; several of them as honest, well-meaning Persons, though mislead through weakness of Judgment, and scruples of Conscience.

3. This Worship considered with the Acts for Uniformity, hath been occasionally, or at least eventually Evil, in respect of the War and Miseries in King *Charles* the First his dayes, occasioned much, if not beginning by the Imposition of the Liturgy on *Scotland*, for an Union of both Nations in Worship. That Nation was so much incensed that they drove, or were ready to drive the Ministers out of their Churches at the reading of it, and broke out into a Rebellion, which infected *England* with their Covenant to down with the Liturgy, and Bishops.

4. This Worship by the exceeding strictness of the Acts for Uniformity, Subscriptions, Assent and Consent, &c. hath been an occasion why so many Dissenting Ministers of considerable Gifts and Graces have been rendered in a great measure unserviceable to the Church by Suspension, or Deprivation.

Some in Queen *Elizabeth*'s time, when (as the *Reverend Dean of St. Paul's* saith in his *Unreas. of Separation*;) they could very ill be spared, nor to speak of those in King *James* the First his Reign, and King *Charles* the First; of later years, as the return of King *Charles* the Second, a great Number of Ministers, Good and Worthy Men in the main, and for the generality of them, were deprived for their Nonconformity.

5. This Worship hath been eventually Evil, by weakning the hands of Discipline, while the scandalous open evil Livers have escaped the Censures of the Church, together with the more peaceable, and innocently-minded Separatists. Thus *Dr. Cumbe* on the *Communion Service*, Discipline withheld (saith he) in favour of Dissenters, left by imposing of it there, this Holy Means of Reformation should be despised, rather than obeyed. And should Men have gone about to suppress and reform Debauchery and Prophaneness by a strict Presentation of them, the Court, which hath more hotly pursued the Dissenters, than the Scandalous and Vicious, would like enough have put them upon Prosecution of Dissenters, without any favour or difference between the weak and the wilful, which because of the ill Consequence (which too often followed) Excommunication and Imprisonment,

prisonment, many Ministers and Church-Wardens were more backward and averse unto. Their Consciences would not suffer them to work such ill and trouble to their Christian Brethren, Fellow Protestants, Loving Neighbours, for some small difference in lesser matters not destructive of their Salvation. And no doubt but the Wisdom of our Governours saw the Evil and Inconvenience of those severities. When they took away the *Penal Laws* that made the *Common Prayer*, and *Act for Uniformity* so terrible to the contrary-minded.

Arg. 3. For Proof that the *Common Prayer*; according to the *Acts for Uniformity*, is inconvenient in some respect, and may admit of Alteration, because of the great disgusts, and almost invincible prejudices of People, (especially in the Country) against this Worship, or at least some things therein. *Cars Peaceable Moderator, or Plain Considerations for Satisfaction to the disaffected to our Common-Prayers.* In the Preface, many stumble much at our Book of *Common Prayers*; and some of them, I take to be good Christians, honest, moderate, well-meaning People, and have found by experience much of their disaffection to it doth lye upon their mistake through Ignorance, not peevish wilfulness. After all our Preaching and Instruction, and Exhortations in behalf of the *Common Prayer*, we do not find that success which we use to have in other matters, and which we might expect, if their prejudice were not so deeply rooted in them, and too mighty for us. The difficulty is great, because the guilt of People is great. Where People have often sinned any Sin, the harder it is to repent: And how often have may been present at these Prayers? Yet, I fear, scarce ever prayed heartily and acceptably. Again, Sins descending from Parents to their Children, are harder to be worked out of them; but prejudices against this Worship have been transmitted down from Parents, and as it were entailed upon some Families: So that there is as little hopes of gaining them over, as for bringing Men off from the Religion of their Ancestours; which commonly proves unsuccessful.

Again the Commonness of this Guilt, were it but two or three in a Congregation that were prejudiced against it, there were the more hopes, that by the Examples of others they might be recovered: But when it is a great, (if not the greater) part of the Congregation, that is not heartily reconciled to this Worship (as I fear it is in too many Parishes.) It is the greater difficulty, when the Disease is so general,

ral, when the Infection hath spread it self so much, to cure it effectually.

There is too much proof of Peoples prejudices, in that the number is so small, so few that come to the Prayers upon the Holy Dayes; and yet the Church is so exceedingly full at a Funeral Sermon, (or any other preaching time,) when People are not much longer at Church than on some Holy Dayes. And on the Lord's Day there are few that will come to the Prayers, to be present at the whole Service, many hard Speeches against them, some reviling them, as the Mals-Book, Popish, Superstitious will Worship, Prayers of course a cold dead piece of Formality. There are so many Objections, Scruples, and Cavils against it, as dull and tedious for the length of it; as a Form of others making, and not the Ministers own; as Book-Prayers slighted by the vulgar upon that account, who say they can read the *Common Prayer* as well as the Parson; against the Responses, though used among the *Jews* and *Primitive Christians*; against the short Prayers, and Hymns read (and not sung,) disused both in our other Devotions, more commonly but one continued Prayer without any intermixture; against some things censured as vain Repetitions; and against the Ceremonies used in the Worship. As to particular exceptions you may find enough, if not more than enough in the Grand Debate between the Conformists and Nonconformists: How these prejudices may be in a great measure abated and taken away, I shall show as the benefit of Union, That a Comprehension of the more sober and moderate Dissenters might do it in time.

Evils of this Prejudice.

First, It is the cause of the scandalous abuse and profanation of Holy Dayes. If People were unprejudiced, an Hour spent in devout Prayer and Praises, due Attention unto the Word of God, and sometime in good instruction of Youth, and Explication upon the Church-Catechisme, or Exposition of the Epistle and Gospel of the Day, would turn to some good account; and the *Evening Service* used to, as appointed on Holy Dayes; but prejudice mars and hinders all this from taking effect, and makes our Holy-Dayes useless in many Parishes, a loss and hindrance rather than advantage to Religion.

Secondly, It hath occasioned much dishonour to God on the Lord's Day. First, By a great neglect of this Worship, several absenting from it, and staying till the Prayers are over before they come, and

losing the benefit of this Worship wholly; which is commonly the bigger half of God's Worship on the Forenoons, and the whole Service of God in many Parishes in the Afternoon, there being no Sermon, nor Catechising, nor at least no Explication of Catechisme. And is it nothing for so many People in many Parishes to lose the benefit of half God's solemn Worship? No doubt but they are highly guilty before God, and will be found so at that day, when Sins which the World counts light of, shall appear in their just weight of Guilt according to the Word of God. Again Secondly, It occasions much dishonour to God on his own day, by reason of Peoples great unprofitableness in this Duty; many present at it, manifesting such a careless Spirit, as if they were not worshipping God; doing any thing rather than that: Some waiting with great impatience, until the Prayers be at an end, as if there were no good to be gotten by them. How is it to be expected, that it should be done to edifying, until Peoples prejudices be removed? That their Hearts should be right and devout in a Worship, which their minds are not reconcil'd unto? They must be brought to some good liking of it, as a true and sound Worship of God, such as God will own, before they will serve God with the Internal Acts of Devotion, be Spiritual and acceptable with him in his Worship. And if it be little to you to neglect this Worship, or lose the benefit of it when you do perform it heartlessly, praying as if you pray'd not, and so you may expect that God should hear as if he heard not, and give you a cold Answer to such cold and faint Requests: And it is to be feared, that the lukewarmness and indifferency of many (not the worst of Christians) in this Worship will hardly consist with their Everlasting Welfare, much less attain the ends of Devotion. Thirdly, Consider further, That this great abuse of God's VVorship, and unprofitable performance of it, is like to be an hindrance to you, as to God's Blessing on the remaining Duties: And will that do no hurt, if the Prayers (as some think) will do no good? VVe are forbid to *quench the Spirit* and his Grace: Imagine we Men to be warmed and fervent in Spirit, and in frame for Holy things at their first coming to Church, this Heavenly warmth and zeal must needs be quenched and cooled by their dull and dead-hearted formality in this VVorship.

You know, one Sin *grieves the Holy Spirit*, and makes him withdraw further from us: One Duty carelessly and negligently performed makes him

him the more unwilling to assist in other duties. They that regard not the Word read, God will regard them the less in the Word preached. They that give not God the Honour in his Praises due to his Name, God will regard their Prayers the less: And if your first praying in the publick Prayers be turned into Sin, shall not their latter Service be less acceptable with him, than if every Duty and every Service were performed in a Spiritual manner to Edifying?

Again Thirdly, The Peoples Prejudice and ill Opinion of some things in this Worship does work in them an ill Opinion of the Governours in Church and State, who enjoin them. They are ready to think, that the Governours have little care and concern for the good of their Souls, little regard to their Edification, who continue those things which in their judgments are no edifying, and their continuance notwithstanding all the Objections and Exceptions against them.

Again Fourthly, Their prejudice hindereth them from discerning what is good, or useful, and excellent, in the *Common Prayer*, and disposeth them on the contrary to cavil, and find fault with it, in what is inconvenient, to gather the doubtful and obscure passages, and to stretch every thing to the worst sense, even beyond the intention and design of them, when a good liking and approbation of it would dispose them to judge Charitably; and *Charity*, you know, covers a multitude of lesser faults.

Cure of these Prejudices. I doubt not, but that (by the Blessing of God) such Concessions and Alterations in the *Common Prayers*, as to take in our Dissenting Brethren (as certainly the more sober and moderate Ministers of the Presbyterian Perswasion would come in upon some Concessions) would weaken much Peoples Scruples and Objections against the Prayers. For we know, *non minus exemplis quam preceptis docemur*, the People are lead by the Example of their Teachers, as much, as by their Doctrines: When they shall find the ablest Ministers among the Dissenters to read, and conform to it in their Practice, and in their Preaching to defend and vindicate it, either and persuade others to conform therunto, (as even the Old Nonconformists, not to the Prayers, but to the Catechisms, and the subscription by Canon, used to do) the People (at least in some considerable measure) may come to be convinced of their Error in the dis-

esteem of these Prayers ; Besides, that their Prejudices, Opinionative Conceits, and Scruples will fall of themselves, when the things that offend them are taken out of the way. Then People will profit more, when prejudice is abated ; and be ashamed to carry themselves so negligently, and contemptuously, as before ; and the whole Worship of God, the Prayers and Office of the Desk as well as of the Pulpit be done to Edifying, not clashing one against another, nor contending for the Pre-eminence ; Holy-Days of the Churches appointment by that means will be more improved, as Peoples prejudices against the Service shall cease or decay ; and we may hope to see the Lord worshipped in the Beauty of Holyness, and somewhat like the Zeal and Devotion, Grace and Spirit which the Primitive Christians manifested in their forms of Prayer : Whereas now we bear only or chiefly a Conformity to them in the External Modes of our Worship, while we have lost the inward Life, and keep the Form of their Godly Prayers without that Power and Spiritual Affection which they had ; as *Tertullian* tells us, *Besieging God with their Prayers*, as it were piercing the Heavens to the Throne of Grace, doing Violence unto it, to take Heaven, or Heavenly and Spiritual Blessings by force. We are told too, how forward the Primitive Christians used to be, and earnest to be present at the beginning of their Worship, with Sighs and Tears in their Eyes, manifesting their Internal and unfeigned Devotion. And if Peoples prejudices should once be overcome, and they come to any good Appetite to this Spiritual Food, they would be as sure to come to the beginning of God's Worship, as commonly they do to the beginning of a Feast, or at least few that will stay until that is over before they come ; and few that would lose the benefit of so much of God's Worship, as they do by coming late, and worshipping God in an outward lifeless way, without an inward Conformity ; which is the unhappiness of our times, and is never like to be remedied while Peoples prejudices continue, and the things that they disgust, as the length of the Prayers, the often use of the Lord's Prayer, the Sign of the Cross, Reading the Second Service at the Communion Table, or Altar, with bowing towards it, Godfathers, &c.

Arg. 3. For Alteration in the Prayers is from the difference of the present Case, from that at the Reformation.

First,

First, This Worship, considered with the several Forms, Orders, &c. was more necessary then, when the Ministers were very ignorant, (many of them) and more fit to read others Sermons, (as they did the Homilies with profit) and to use others Prayers, than either to make Sermons or Prayers of their own. They were ignorant, that it was complained, some of them could scarce Read, and many of them did not understand Latin; and then a Form of others making, sound in Doctrine and Worship, was profitable, if not necessary, least they should have put in Errors or Heresies into their own Prayers. For they would have made very pitiful stuff, sorry matter of it, if they were to have made any long Prayer of their own, though a Form. But now there is more Light and Knowledge in these days, (to give that Argument a just weight) inasmuch, that if Ministers be not very idle and negligent, so many good Books of Devotion, and excellent pieces of Divinity, as the Church of Christ abounds with, they may be able to make such Prayers, as may be sound and comprehensive, suitable and edifying. Nay, they may attain to some ability to express their desires to God without an exact Form, if they are such persons, as are much in the practice of this Duty, as it is fit Ministers should be, after the example of the Apostles, *Acts 6. 4. But we will give our selves continually to Prayer, and the Ministry of the Word.*

Secondly, It was more seasonable at the Reformation than another Worship; because it receded least from their former Worship, leaving that only in what was plainly and undoubtedly evil; and so was it more safe upon the same account. For it is a common Rule in all Changes in Bodies Natural and Political, that the Change be no more then needs must, it being dangerous to run from one extrem into another. And that Change which they did make in the Worship, was not without its danger; for in *Devonshire* and *Cornwall* there was a Rebellion upon the account of changing their Worship: But there would be no danger of Rebellion now upon some just alterations. It caused one indeed in *Scotland* (as before) which infected *England*.

Thirdly, It was more satisfactory and acceptable to the generality of the Nation, at the time of the Reformation, than any other. So that we do not read of any that separated from it in *Edward VI.*

days. And though, when they were at liberty in *Germany*, some were for another Worship at *Frankford*, yet we do not read, but they Conformed to it in *England*, until near the *Spanish Invasion*, when a party of *Jesuits* and *Roman Priests* were found crying up a sort of Free Prayer, drawing some off from the Common-Prayer, though not men of note. And in the Act, *Primo Elizabethæ*, you may find the esteem they had for this Worship: It saith, to the great decay of the due Honour of God, and discomfort to the Professors of the Truth of Christs Religion, the Common-Prayer Book, and the Act for it was repealed and taken away in Queen *Maries* days. But now the generality of Dissenters, and many that follow the Parish Ministers are dissatisfied in it; and have little or no liking to it; and whatever is the matter, the genius of the people will not bear it, or some things in it; or at least not otherwise then as a Burthen and a Grievance.

Arg. IV. For proof that the Common-Prayer, according to the Acts for Uniformity, is inconvenient in some respects; because of the confinement of Ministers to the use of it, not only in the publick, but in their Families, in a manner wholly excluding all other manner of Prayer, even the most sober and discreet use of the Gift, as *Euxor Band.* Upon the Ordinance against the Common-Prayer Book, Sect. 4. I am not against a grave, modest, discreet, and humble use of Ministers gifts, even in publick, the better to exerce their own, and the peoples affections to the present occasions. Again, Upon denying him his *Orphina*, Sect. 10. Which gift as I do not wholly exclude from publick occasions, so I allow it its just liberty, and use in private and devout retirements.

And the Act for Uniformity, in the beginning of King *Edward* Reign, did give Liberty to use any other Prayers and Psalms, taken out of the Bible, at any due time, nor letting or omitting thereby the Service, or any part thereof. More may be spoken to enforce this part, that Ministers should labour after some measure of the gift and ability to utter their minds to God in Prayer, without keeping strictly to a Form.

First, Ejaculatory Prayer calls for some measure of this gift, as when we lift up our Hearts to God upon any present occasion in some short

short Prayer ; as in time of Temptation, upon sudden Danger, or news of the Sickness or Death of a Friend, or Judgment or Mercy befalling the Nation, or Parish in which we live ; or according to the Discourse and Company which we are in, or matter which we read. *Bishop Taylor in his Rules to his Clergy ; That they should teach their People to be much in this Ejaculatory Prayer.*

Secondly, For some gift and ability to Pray without a Form is, because that Examination of our Hearts and Lives upon set days of Fasting and Humiliation before a Sacrament, and in times of Affliction and Sickness, or any Calamity ; the dayly Examination also according to many sober Heathens practice, *Pythagoras* his Advice to his Scholars to that purpose ; and which is the practice of good men, and serves only to find our our sins, that we may beg pardon of them, and power against them, or be thankful to God for his Grace, keeping us from sin, or enabling us to do good, and this cannot be done in one set Form.

Thirdly, Ministers Sermons should be begun, continued, and ended with Prayer. Prayer for Direction to a suitable Subject, such as the necessities of the people call for Method, Matter, Language, that all may be done to edifying : And when it is finished, it is fitting to recommend it unto God, for his Blessing upon it. The more Prayer, the more power working with our Sermons. You will find such Sermons take most effect, they will be weak without it. And after Preaching, that the Word Preached may be put in practice. Some Ministers in the Country having a short Prayer after Sermon, respecting the principal matter of the Sermon, as the Duties, Graces, Truths of our Christian Religion, or Sins ; as *2 Tim. 3. 16. The Word being profitable for Doctrine ;* Reproof, to convince Gossayers ; for Correction and Amendment of evil Manners, and for Instruction in Righteousness or Holiness, by an exercise of the Graces, performance of the Duties of our Religion : Now Prayer must accompany all the Ordinances of God to sanctifie, and get Gods Blessing on them.

Fourthly, It is fit that all should vary in their Prayers, so much as occasions serves, our Sins, our Wants, our Mortities : Neither those of the Nation, nor a particular Congregation, are the same always,

not altogether, though much the same. Therefore it is fit our Petitions, Intercessions, and Thanksgivings should admit of some alteration.

Arg. V. For some ability to pray without an exact Form is, that in *Phil. 4. 6.* *In every thing by Prayer and Supplication with Thanksgiving let your Requests be made known unto God :* In every thing of great concernment and importance in our Lives, be it Worldly or Spiritual matters. Besides, in the two first Centuries this sort of Prayer prevailed in all probability, and a mixt Worship in the third, partly by Form, and part otherwise.

'Tis too apparent to be denied, and hath been the observation of too many, and their complaints too, that Ministers take occasion from the use of the Common-Prayers to neglect the sober use of free and conceived Prayer, being insufficient to pray upon an emergent occasion, to the scandal of their Function, and derision of Dissenters. If one unexpectedly light upon a sick person, and be desired to pray for him, it is a pitiful excuse for him to say he hath not his Book with him. In case of any Calamity befalling a Parish; First, any Infectious Disease, or much Sickness, &c. Or any National Judgment, as upon poor *Ireland*, or Mercy, as the Miracle of Mercy and Deliverance wrought for us of this Nation, it will be expected, or at least it is fit that Ministers should put in Occasional Expressions for such matters; else it will be look'd upon as a weakness, and uncomfortable failing in them, not to be able to say a Word, or put in an Expression in things of such Importance and Concernment to the Congregation, which remain many times unprovided for by the Common-Prayers.

First, The length of the Common-Prayers allows little room for the exercise of the gift in publick, though it be with Sobriety and Moderation. So much of the time passeth in the use of this Worship, that there is little remaining, when the Sermon takes up so much besides.

Secondly, Many in Cathedrals, Visitations, and often in their Parish Churches use only the Lords Prayer in the Pulpit, considering the length of their Common-Prayers. And indeed a long Prayer in the Pulpit, after the long Prayers of the Desk, seems to me to be highly inconvenient for the Common-Prayer, casting a disrespect upon that; whereas

whereas if the Ministers own Prayer were placed after the Sermon, to pray for a Blessing upon the practical matter of the Sermon among other things, it would much further Ministers Gift and Ability in Prayer, and promote Gods Blessing upon the Word. In Duties preached to pray for Grace to perform them; Graces, that they may be wrought in us; Truths, (such as are without Controversie) for Grace to know and believe them Spiritually; and Grace to repent of sins, or keep from them, with a Confession and Thanksgiving for Mercies Spiritual or Temporal.

Thirdly, The Canon bidding Prayer, taken in a strict sence, seemeth utterly to forbid and disallow of all use of the gift in publick. Therefore by some Conformists it is condemned, and held utterly unlawful for them, to use any other than an exact Form in generals according to that Canon.

Fourthly, Some look upon themselves bound to use the Common-Prayers, and no others in their Families, according to *that Order*; All-Priests and Deacons are to say daily the Morning and Evening Prayer, either privately or openly, not being let by Sicknes, or some other urgent cause. And the Curate, not being reasonably hindered, should say the same in the Parish-Church: So that if it be not said openly in the Parish Church, if Sicknes or some other urgent cause do not hinder, it is to be said privately in their Families, or personally by a mans self.

Fifthly, Some Conformists so addicted to this Form in their Families, and in publick, are so set against all other manner of Prayer, as to call it *ex tempore* Effusion, Confusion, vain Babblings, Non-sense, running beyond the very heighth of Conformity. Far be it from me to plead for, or to excuse and countenance the wild extravagancies of some fanciful Spirits, who place their Devotion more in their various modes of speaking to God, and expressing the matter of their Prayers rather than in the Truth and Piety of the Heart: Yet I think we ought, with Bishop *Wilkins*, to endeavour after the Gift of Prayer; accordingly to exercise it in those cases above-mentioned: And perhaps some more liberty in publick were desirable, or at least the exercise of that liberty, which some suppose given us already; as *Cars* Plain Considerations for satisfaction to the disaffected to our Book of Common-

Common Prayer, p. 8. Our Ministers have liberty, not only in private, but in publick, both before and after their Sermons, to exercise their Gift of Prayer, and to enlarge themselves upon any emergent occasion or opportunity afforded; as God shall enable them; and they themselves shall judge any way expedient or needful. *Case of Consistency of the Lawfulness of joining with Forms of publick Prayer*, Part 1. p. 28. "The Clergy of the Church of England are not restrained from exercising their own abilities in publick Prayer; in which is allowed them the liberty the Dissenting Ministers can claim or pretend to, to express in their own words all the matter of publick Prayer, with all the sobriety, affection and seriousness they are able. And this permission being of long continuance, and hitherto uncontroled by our Church Governours amounts to an allowance &c. Such a liberty as this, and such a practice concurrent with it were desirable: But all are not agreed hereiny nor satisfied in point of this liberty.

Art. 6. For Concessions and Alterations in the Common Prayer, because of the frequent commands of bearing with the infirmities of the weak; (i. e. indulging the weak and scrupulous with some favour and liberty to forbear those things they scruple;) of becoming all things to all men to gain some, and pleasing our Brother for his good to edification; and that all things be done in Charity, &c. these call for some Concessions; as my Lord Hales in his *Discourse of Religion*, tells us: Some allowance is to be made in the case of a weak Brother, who on that account refuseth, and cannot, though he would, obey. Either all the Commands of bearing with the infirmities of the weak, signifie thus much, (saith he) or nothing at all. And though the common Answer is, Is it not fitter that he should submit to the Church than the Church submit to him? Yet that Answer, I presume, is not sufficient in this case; though there be a Duty that the Child owes to the Father, yet that will not excuse the Father from the Duty which he owes to his Child, especially when it is from a Conscientious account that he refuseth to obey.

Mr. Tull's Sermon of Moderation, p. 22. St. Paul made himself all things to all men; &c. And how was he all things to Bishop Hall, all, as a Learned Prelate of our own, asks the Question, if he did not sometime remit of his right to some,

Bishop

Bishop Saunderson ad Adam, Sermon 8. Sect. 38. We deal not like Christians, no, nor like reasonable Creatures, if we expect, all men should come to our bent in every thing, and we our selves relent not our own *Sustains* in the least matter for their sakes. And even *Dr. Sherlock of Religious Assemblies*, p. 22. Speaks of making all reasonable concessions to the weakness or ignorance of some doubting and scrupulous Consciences; and of giving ease to them, and relaxing the terms of Communion.

13 But the experience of many years shews that our Brethren remain unsatisfied in their Consciences.

2. They offer to give it in upon their Oaths; that they are not satisfied in Conscience; (as some to my knowledge would); and *Dr. More* tells us so on their behalf, I think in his *Mystery of Iniquity, and Answer touching Liberty in Religion*, a place cited by a Nonconformist in our Discourse together.

3. They seem to be in earnest that it is really. Struple and dissatisfaction in Conscience, when they would part with their Benefices and People most dear unto them, and suffer Fines and Imprisonments rather than Conform.

4. Again, Their Lives prove the same. Men whose Lives are all of a piece and uniform; such as make Conscience to keep from other sins; why should they not be believed in this wherein they plead Conscience? Can their Integrity be disproved that they are men of no Conscience in other things. But I do verily believe our Nonconforming Brethren, especially the moderate men of the Presbyterian Opinion (not disowning Episcopacy) to be of as unblameable Lives, as any sort of men among us: And these are the men that we plead for to be taken into our Church again.

I shall cite some Conformists in Testimony of their Weakness and not Willfulness in their Dissent from us; and pleading for favour to the Weak.

Queen Elizabeth, as *Sir Francis Walsingham* tells us in his Letter to *Monseigneur Cröy of France*, made a difference between the Papists

and Puritans in *Conscience*, and Papists and Puritans of Faction and Sedition.

It was not so judged by our Governours in that Age, when the *Act of Uniformity* was first Established ; as if all Separatists must separate from wilfulness and obstinacy ; but a more Charitable interpretation there was of mens scrupling Obedience [in Conformity] ; as is evident by the relief given to such by Queen *Elizabeth*, who with the Advice of her Council put forth a Book of Articles to be Enquired of at their Visitation, and Presentation to be made accordingly : And of Fifty Six in number there was not among them One that was judged offensive on purpose, against the Rites and Ceremonies then Established, which shewed they were not all wilful and obstinate that could not Conform : And some Bishops formed the *Articles of Enquiry*, with more moderation. *Nyes Suprem.* p. 40.

In the Reasons given in the Common-Prayer for Kneeling at the Communion. Least the same Kneeling should by any persons out of Ignorance and Infirmitie [i. e. through Weakness] or out of Malice and Obstinacy, be misconstrued and depraved, &c.

Bishop Jewels Answer to Mr. Hardings Preface in his Reply. Some of these that now be about you, being I trust, not frowardly carried away with wilful Malice, but having the fear of God and reverent Zeal to do the best ; though perhaps not knowledge sufficient to judge what is best Was his Charity such towards Papists ? No doubt but it was as great to Dissenting Protestants.

Lloyds State Worthies, in the Life of Sir William Cecil, Lord Burleigh, in his Letter to Archbishop Whitgift, for some scrupulous Ministers : My Lord, I fear no sensual or wilful Reculant [among those he pleaded for]. I sharply admonished them, that if they will be disturbers in their Churches, they must be corrected. After follows the Lord *Burleighs* Character : He was not rigid ; he would help the good natured, yet punish the stubborn ; which shews those were not such (at least not in his judgment) for whom he interceded.

King Charles II. Declaration, Dec. 26. 1662. His Majesty, being therefore perswaded that multitudes have suffered, being ensnared in their Consciences, and not from wilfulness.

True

True State of the Primitive Church; Truly I think him very defective in Charity, however he abounds in Faith, who thinks all Papists, or Lutherans, or Calvinists maliciously or wilfully blind.

Dr. Barrow on Eph 5. 2. towards the end; If Christ and his Glory, if the Service and Salvation of his People be our end; if we mind the same common Salvation, as the Apostle calleth it, the differences which after remain amongst us, arise purely from a narrowness and defect of judgment, and not from any other root of Malignancy, or Hostility.

How such are to be dealt with we are told also, and what favour is to be shown them in respect of that their weakness. *King Charles the First's Exile* Upon His Majesties Retirement from *Westminster*, Sect. 10. Sure that Man cannot be blamable to God or Man, who seriously endeavours to see the best reason of things, and faithfully follows what he takes for reason; the uprightness of his intentions will excuse the possible failings of his Understanding.

Lord Faulkland's Speech to the House of Commons, 1641. If it be feared, that they will employ some of our Laws with a severity beyond their intention, against some of their weaker Brethren, that we may be sure to take away that Power, let us take away those Laws.

Dr. Fuller's Moderation of the Church of England, p. 16. Benignity [i.e. favour] is to be shewed to the humble and peaceable, but it can in no wise be challenged by the proud and forward. *Item p. 24.* The Execution of the Ecclesiastical Laws remitted only in consideration of the weakness of the People. *Item p. 39.* According to Equity (which is using as we say a Conscience, p. 18.) Our Church desires all her Laws may be interpreted. *Benignius Leges Anglie sunt interpretandæ, quæ voluntas earum conservetur. Capienda est occasio quæ præbet benignius responsum.*

Bishop Saunderson on Rom. 14. 3. Sect. 25. We are bound not to despise our Nonconforming Brethren, so far forth, as may probably appear to us, they are weak, and not wilful; and declares there are some such, Sect. 29.

Doctor Barrow in *Ephyl. 2. towards the end*: As we deal with Children, allowing to the infirmities of their Age, their Ignorance, Frowardness, and Unpleasant Humour, without distracting them, so should we with our Brethren, who labour under any weakness of Mind or Humour.

Doctor Tillotson's Second Volume of Sermons, par. 95. It's great Charity to consider the imperfection, prejudices of Men; especially which are rooted in Education, and which Men are confirmed in by the Reverence they bear to those that have been their Teachers; and great Allowances are to be given Men in this case.

Bishop Taylor's Rules, in his Clergy: Think no Man considerable upon the pretence of a tender Conscience; unless he live a good Life; but if he be an humble Person, Modest, apt to learn, and desirous of Information, if he seeks for it in all ways reasonable and pious, and is obedient to Laws, then take care of him, use him tenderly, persuade him meekly, reprove him gently, and deal mercifully with him, till God shall reveal that also unto him, in which his unavoidable trouble and temptation lies.

Principles and Practices, &c. par. 33. They (i. e. the Moderate Men of the Church of England) Believe that those who differ from the Established way of Religion, ought not to be esteem'd, or dealt with, as Men of tender Consciences, [i. e. weak ones] who are not quiet, and peaceable, modest and charitable in their behaviour towards others, that are not of their way and mind; but must needs be confronting of Authority. *Judge Hal's Discourse of Religion*, par. 2. Some perchance transported too far in scrupling on opposing some Ceremonies or Forms, not from frowardness, and peevishness, or a Spirit of opposition, but in the sincerity and simplicity of their hearts; those though mistaken, yet certainly deserve Compassion, Tenderness, yea, and Love also, much rather than severity and contempt.

Doctor Hascard, Dean of Windford in Eph. 4. 22: To allow no Grace for Common Errors and Frailties; this is severity and unmercifulness.

Doctor Good's Exhortation and Charge, p. 16. Those to be among them that are of a quiet and peaceable Spirit, agreeing with us in the most necessary points of Religion. He gives us Reason, why Debauchery and Profaneuess ought not to be more severely punished, than Negative Separation; and simple Nonconformity. *In His second Reason*, of the Sins of Prophaneuess and Debauchery being trifling for Drunkards and profane Persons do not plead Ignorance and Weakness, as if of a more malignant Nature than that of Ignorance, though such as was not altogether invincible to such as they are, yet still do but negligently

Doctor Burnet, the Bishop of Salisbury's Exhortation to Peace and Union, p. 34. Let us also consider our weakness, as Brethren, let us bear with one anothers infirmities, let us give some allowances to the weakness of those that are mislead by the force of Education, and the byas of Vulgar prejudices.

Serious and Compassionate Enquiry, p. 204. He that pleads for Compassion upon the account of his weakness, must first willingly submit himself to Instruction. Secondly, Be uniformly Conscientious. Thirdly, He will do all that he can, if he cannot do all that is commanded. Fourthly, He may forbear judging and censuring them that do all that the Law commands. Fifthly, Will freely part with Money and Worldly Matters to preserve his own Innocency and Peace. Again, If after all my Endeavours of satisfying myself to obey the Humane Law, the thing commanded seem unjust, I say this case is pityable. Disobedience then will be only a Sin of Infirmary, which is pityable among Men upon consideration of common Humanity, and is pardonable with God, as other Errors are on a general Repentance.

Mr. Dodwel's Letters about Holy Orders, When you have reduced them [i. e. the Minister, the Person in his Parish] to this Excellent Temper (as p. 19.) to practise the common Duties of Christianity, if you could not persuade them to assent to what you say, through the weakness of their understandings, or your unskillfulness to plead for a good Cause, (i. e. Conformity) with Advantage, you must needs conclude them invincibly Ignorant, and therefore Excusable, before God in this regard, as well as positively acceptable in others; and therefore must be as Charitable in your Judgment, as you believe God will prove favourable in his Final Sentence.

Mr.

Mr. Smithies Spirit of Weakness, p. 68. As the Galatians were overtaken in a fault; Gal. 3. 1. So we must account them likewise, who have dissented from us. When Men are guilty of Errors of Practice, they are wilful and obstinate, for they know they are wrong, &c. But no Man runs wilfully into an Error of Judgment, but it's through the weakness of Judgment, and instability of mind, for which he is to be pitied; *Idem* p. 70. I mention these instances, because some Men will not be persuaded, that there is any thing but wilfulness, and obstinacy, that is the cause of Mens Dissenting, and therefore they ought not to be treated with the *Spirit of Weakness*, p. 71. If we consider what Education many have had, we may well conclude that they were overtaken in the fault of Separation, not that it was a wilful choice.

Mr. Kettlewell's Measure of Christian Obedience, Edit. 2. p. 494. Some prejudices get into Mens Minds, not through any thing of an evil and disobedient Heart, but only through weakness of the Understanding; they are not of an understanding sufficient to examine things exactly, when they embrace their prejudice; for their reason is dim and short sighted, weak and unexperienced, unable thoroughly to search into the Nature of things, and to judge of the various weight, and just force of Reasons; to sift and ransack, separate and distinguish between Solidity and Shew, Truth and Falshood: p. 496 *Idem* p. 117. Love to others produces in us, if they have honest Hearts, but yet are weak in Judgment and Knowledge, a Compassionate fence of their weakness, and endeavours to relieve them.

Argument for Tol and Indul: in difference not of Faith, but of Opinions, Print. 81. It pleasing God in Infinite Goodness to respect the Will, the Intention, the sincere Endeavour of his Servants, and for the rest to put upon Humane Weakness and Infirmity, that Weakness and Infirmity, which he will pardon; and if God himself have so much Tenderness and Compassion for Humane Weakness and Imperfection, shall Men themselves have none for one another? p. 5. *Item* 13. And certainly it would much import to healing our breaches, and to lay the Hears and Animosities that Reign among us, if we more regarded the Conscience, they who do dissent from us, do make, and the good Designs and Ends they aim at, than the very Opinions and Practices themselves, in which they dissent: For in the

former all good Christians agree, and in the latter will ever differ. We ought highly to honour Tenderness of Conscience, and Intentions directed to the Glory of God; and the Common Good of the Church, and of the World, wherever we find them.

Mr. Hoffman's Consider. of present use, on Rom. 15. 6, 7. That the strong ought to bear with the weak, &c. p. 18. By the weak, I mean those which are really so, and not such as use it for an obstinate and ungovernable pretence: When we hear a Man sincerely from the bottom of his Heart, saying, That he cannot think that indifferent which others do; that he cannot admit things that are really lawful in others Opinions, to appear so in his. A Man that is strong ought to pity such a ones weakness, *Item. p. 21.* They seem to be in earnest, when their blindness will inable them to part with that which is dear to them, rather than obey.

Mr. Allen, late of Henfield in Suffex, Pref. to his Sermon, We desire the trouble of none that are peaceable.

Thus you have seen how the Conformists plead for favour to them in the general; and sure it might be as useful and beneficial to the Church in this particular (Condescension to their weakness) as any other.

Besides all this; I could shew out of the Works of Eminent Conformists, that it is acknowledged by them, that there are Good and Worthy Men among the Dissenters from the Church of England. And why should not some consideration be had of them, and somewhat to be done for their sakes, who are prized by Conformists, as Men of Worth and Goodness. And surely, it will be no loss to our Church to lose a few things that may be spared well enough, if She shall gain her Brethren by that means; especially when the loss is of such things as have need of an Alteration or Abrogation for the common good of Protestants. And I hope, saith *Mr. Claud* to the Bishop of London, you will not be wanting in the Duties of Charity, and the Spirit of Peace; and that when the Dispute shall be only of some Temperaments, or of some Ceremonies that are a stumbling-block, and which in themselves are nothing in comparison with an intire re-union, you will make it seen, that you love the Spouse.

of your Master more than your selves. This indeed would manifest in the Fathers of the Church a true Fatherly Affection, great Humility and Condescension, if they shall at length yield somewhat to the Infirmitie and Importunity of Protestant Brethren. And it is highly probable, that such Concessions and Alterations, as to take in our Dissenting Brethren, would take away most of those Evils that have troubled the Church. It were the best way and means to put a stop to the Course of Separation. For when the most eminent and considerable Men of the Nonconformists were taken in (as certainly they would come in) the rest would be discouraged and discountenanced in their Separation, and we might hope that they would fall off by degrees, and in time be wholly recovered to the Church again. Hereby a great many Ministers, considerable for Gifts and Grace, might do service in the Church, who must otherwise be silent, or exercise their Ministry in a way of Separation. As the Separation will cease much by a Comprehension, so will the Envy, Harred, Malice, and Uncharitableness that accompanies a divided Church-state cease in the same measure. And it is to be hoped this would strengthen the hands of Discipline, and turn the Censures of the Church and their force against the scandalous open Evil-livers, instead of vexing of Dissenters. And perhaps in order to this Accommodation, it might be desirable to consider of the Nonconformists Motion, *page 61.* We confess that some Forms have their laudible use to cure that Errour and Vice, that lieth on the other extreme: And might we but sometimes have the liberty to interpose such words, as are needful to call home, and quicken Attention and Affection, we should think that a convenient Conjunction of both might be a well-tempered means to the Common Constitutions of most. By a mixt Worship, partly by a Form, and in some part (be it but little) otherwise, not as of necessity for all, but allowance to some who may be habitually apt for it, as Ministers will increase their Gifts, attaining more Holy Skill, and Ability in Prayer by this means, and be more fitted and ready for Ejaculatory Prayer, and other sort of Occasional Prayer after the Examination of their Hearts and Lives, whether dayly, or upon set times of Fasting and Humiliation; or to follow the Word (read or Preached) with Prayer for a Blessing on that, and the Sacraments, which with all the Ordinances of God are Sanctified, or Blessed by Prayer. Ministers besides by this means being more frequent in the performance of this so great and

and necessary a Duty, will be more ready and inclinable to it at all times, with much ease and freedom, sweetness and delight, which Naturally, much more Spiritually proceed from Use and Custom. And the People will be encouraged by the Examples of their Ministers to do the like, and follow them. And this would mightily promote Religion; all our Religion being like to rise or fall, as we rise or fall in this Duty.

7. To continue our *Common Prayer* in all and every thing the same, it is to be feared will continue, if not perpetuate Schism. While the things scrupled and excepted against continue, we have little or no hopes of gaining our Brethren. They are never like to be so well satisfied in Conscience as to the Assent and Consent to all and every thing, and the undoubted certainty of Baptized Infants Salvation (which Bishop *Usher* in his Body of Divinity, of Baptism doubted of, and so do some Conformists now, Curates, and others, who can use the Baptismal Office) and as to the Sign of the Cross, &c. as to come up to a full Conformity to the present established Worship. There are but four means of curing Schisme, either by Instruction or Toleration, Reprehension, or Comprehension. They have had Instruction long enough; one Conformist after another writing for Conformity, some in the Spirit of Meekness, some with another manner of Spirit; and still they have been answered, and the Nonconformists remained unconvinced, unsatisfied. And as to Toleration of their different Assemblies, there were no cure of Schism that way; though I think, it is of the better sort, like Mr. *Greenham's* Answer to the Bishop of *Ely*, who told him there was a Schism in the Church, and asked him where the fault lay? On either side said he, if they violated the Laws of Love, on neither part (as to culpable Schism) if they lived lovingly together, as they should do notwithstanding the difference of their judgments.

Further, *Mischief of Separation*, page 18. Men may please themselves in talking of preserving Love and Peace under separate Congregations; but our own sad Experience shows the contrary. For as nothing tends more to unite Mens hearts, than joining together in the same Prayers, and Sacraments, so nothing doth more alienate Mens Affections, than withdrawing from each other into separate Communions. Therefore as large a Comprehension as may be is desirable; and no more Toleration of other

Worship than necessity requires, because Toleration without a Comprehension will weaken any Established Church. As to Reprehension (severity I mean by that word) it may make Men Hypocrites, and drive many to Church, who will fall off again, as soon as the severities cease. Men are reasonable Creatures, and what they do, it should be a reasonable service, from an enlightened mind, and well-satisfied Conscience, not by force and violence done to their Consciences, dissembling with God and the World. For neither is God served by such, nor their Souls edified, nor the Communion of Saints encreased by such an Hypocritical Union and Communion with our Church. And though it is not to be denied, but that some may, by such severities, be put upon a more Impartial search and enquiry into the Terms of Communion with us, and so be satisfied really, yet these are but few, the far greater part forsaking us, when once the lash is taken away, and they come to have their liberty. The last and the best means is Comprehension; and that must be by yielding somewhat for Peace sake on either side. And surely, there is no such wide breach, but that there might be a closing, an healing, if we would set our selves in good earnest to it, and would not be too stiff and self-willed. And to this end perhaps it were desirable, that, as the *Dutch* did us the Honour of having some of our Divines at their Synod for composing differences among them; so that we might take in the Assistance of some of their Divines, either by their Personal Presence, or Advice by Letter, as Mr. *Le Moyne*, and the others of *France*, Mr. *De L'Angle*, and Mr. *Cland*, worthy Persons, made some Essay towards an Union in their Letters to his Lordship the *Bishop of London*. This would add a greater Authority unto what should be so established. And the more Protestant Churches that assisted therein, the better and more forcible bond of Union.

But it will be objected (or hath been) nothing will satisfy; The Dissenters will never come in.

I Answer, At King *Charles the Second's* Return, though they did desire many Alterations in the Worship, as to Words and Sentences, Ceremonies, &c. Yet they drew up the principal matters in a short Letter to the most Reverend Arch-Bishop and Bishops, &c. mention'd p. 30, 31, 32. of the *Grand Debate*.

2. It may justly be supposed, that among those Objections and Exceptions against several things therein, (when his Majesties Commission gave them that liberty to make such Reasonable and necessary Alterations, Corrections, and Amendments, as should be agreed upon at that Conference, to be needful and expedient,) there were some things, which were judged by them to be inconvenient, other things to be unlawful. If they had been put to it to declare, what they held to be sinful and unlawful to be submitted to, I doubt not but they would have cut off many things, as only inconvenient, and not necessarily or unavoidably evil, and to have been satisfied as to the matter of Conformity with less.

Another Answer. Judge *Hales* with the Lord Keeper *Bridgeman*, and Bishop *Wilkins* drew up a Model of Abatements and Condescensions for a Comprehension of the more moderate Dissenters, and a limited Indulgence towards such as could not be brought within the Comprehension; and when after several Conferences with two of the Eminentest Presbyterian Divines, heads were agreed on, and some abatements to be made, and some explanations were to be accepted of, they put them into the form of a Bill to be Presented to the next Session of Parliament. In the *Life of Sir Matthew Hale* by Dr. Burnet Bishop of Salisbury, p. 41, 42. He gives us the Reasons that prevailed at that time against it, p. 70, 71, 72, 73. The Councils and Reasons against it being more acceptable to some concealed Papists then in power, as has since appeared too evidently, the whole project for Comprehension was let fall, and those who had set it a foot, came to be looked on with an evil eye, as secret favourers of Dissenters, underminers of the Church, and every thing else that jealousy and distaste could cast on them.

A fourth Answer shall be given you out of the *Conformists Plea for the Nonconformists*, Part 4. p. 26, 27. In Answer to that Objection, should we yield to any one of these we are far from gaining the rest.

1. Gain any of them, and we shall be the more and stronger by that addition.

2. Except the Presbyterians, the most of the other Dissenters agree in their Modes of Government: So that what you grant to one Party, is granted to more.

ing. Is it Reason and Charity, that those who would unite shall not, because all will not upon some abatements.

4. Gain some, and they will help to draw in others.

5. The more are United, the fewer remain to be Tolerated; by which Toleration I mean no more, but a forbearing one another in Love; with the use of Gospel means to convince and gain them, if possible, and by the Civil Sword to restrain and suppress them, when it shall be necessary, and dangerous to the State, and not before. Thus that Excellent Person has given a most solid Answer, with a most Christian Spirit: I shall add what I had from one of his Majesties Chaplains by way of Answer to the same Objection: If there be but room or way made for them the fault will be their own if they will not come in. If the Mother will receive her Children, and entertain them as her own in love, they must bear the blame if they will not return home. I might add that they will shew themselves unworthy of that favour given them in the *Act of Toleration*, if they grow more obstinate and averse, and utter enemies to an accommodation, and may provoke Authority to take it away.

Another Objection, *Why should there be any Concessions or Alterations, when the present terms of Conformity are Lawful?*

Answer, They may be unlawful to them, (for to him that esteemeth any thing to be unlawful, to him it is unlawful; according to that, *Rom. 14. 14.*) but not *ex natura rerum, per se*, and so they may be Lawful to us, and our Consciences; or may be Lawful to one and not another, in point of Practice and Conformity; so that yielding to their Consciences and their Scruples may consist with the uprightness and integrity of our own, and a Conformity upon just grounds of conviction and satisfaction.

A second Answer: The yielding to the Dissenters may be such, as not utterly to take away any thing, but to leave some things at liberty, as the Ceremonies; especially the Sign of the Crolls. And as the great Dean of *St. Pauls* motioned, whether those expressions, which impose the strict exercise of Discipline in *Burying the Dead*, were not better left at liberty in our present case; [there being a confessed want

want and neglect of Discipline] : And whether requiring only an use of the Liturgy, and approbation of that use, and subscription to it, leaving the subscription according to the Canon, and the Assent and Consent, to all and every thing contained and prescribed, according as persons Consciences are satisfied or unsatisfied therein : It is certain that the Uniformity in Worship, and the end of that *Act for Uniformity* is answered by an use of the Prayers, as by Law Established. No doubt but many would Conform upon such a Liberty granted, who cannot satisfy their Consciences in the present terms of Conformity : But the leaving things thus at Liberty, were no Argument that they are Unlawful.

Further, Such yielding as this would make no such Alteration but that our present Common-Prayer Books would serve ; which they might do, if several Repetitions were left out, as of the Lords Prayer, which we used so often at first, (and continued since because received at first,) that the people might learn it in their *English Tongue* ; even those many that could not read, and used before to say it in *Latin, Pater noster, &c.*

Other Repetitions, as of the *Gloria Patri* after every Psalm, (yielded to be left out by those who met at the Bishop of *Lincolns House*, in King *Charles I.* time) and the one of the Creeds, using the *Nicene Creed* upon some certain days only : Which were the better way of lessening the length of the Prayers, by taking away some Repetitions, which our Dissenting Brethren do not pretend to be unlawful, but only to be inconvenient, as some Conformists acknowledge also.

Third Answer : Further, *The Preface to the Common-Prayer* acknowledgeth, "that the particular Forms of Worship, and the Ceremonies appointed to be used, being things in their own nature indifferent and alterable ; it is but reasonable, such changes and alterations should be made therein, &c."

It saith further, "That in the Reigns of several Princes of Blessed Memory since the Reformation, the Church upon just and weighty Considerations hath yielded to make such Alterations, as in their respective times were thought convenient. But when the Church

Church did yield in those matters, she did not yield them up as utterly unlawful, but inconvenient, or less suitable to those times; *et pro conditione temporum*. Some things are more, some less convenient, and fit for continuance or alteration accordingly.

Fourth Answer : The present terms of Conformity will be the same as to their Lawfulness or Unlawfulness, whether there be any condescensions for Dissenters, or none at all. As I am a Conformist both in judgment and practice, so I could offer Arguments in defence of my present Conformity, as well as for Concessions to the Nonconformists. Yet the Learned Bishop *Cosins* declared in his last Testament, that it was the great duty of us all to Unite, and I am sure it is so, and that it is no duty of any at all, to censure or condemn the present terms of Conformity as Unlawful, upon the account of any concessions or recessions from them, for so good an end as an happy Re-union and Comprehension. I need not remind you in how many Precepts this Duty is enjoyned, how tenderly and compassionately the Apostles of our Lord dealt with weak ones, how earnestly they charged us to receive them, to bear with them, to become all things to them to gain the weak, to please them to their edification, &c. Arguments enough to convince us that it is our duty, whatever the World say, or think of us, to yield somewhat to the weakness of our Brethren, and to relax, as the Author of the *Serious and Compassionate Enquiry* has it, p. 102. Making the terms of Communion more free and easie; this is highly recommended by some good men, as the most proper expedient for a Protestant Church in our condition.

Another Objection. *It would be a dishonour (say some) to our first Reformers, to take away those things which they Eestablished.*

To which I Answer; as *True state of the Primitive Church*. The Fathers of this Church, when they Reformed this Nation from Popery, were desirous to fetch off as many as they could, retaining for this cause all the Ceremonies, &c. Certainly we cannot do our Forefathers a greater honour, than to observe their Rule of Reason, to conform to the times; and therefore they are grossly mistaken, who think it a dishonour to them, for us to take away what they have Eestablished, when we keep close to the reason wherefore they did Eestablish it.

Iren. p. 225. This Temper was used by our Reformers, in composing our Liturgy in reference to the Papists, to whom they had then an especial eye, as being the only party then appearing whom they desired to draw into their Communion, by coming as near them, as they well and safely could ; I say the same reason which at that time made them yield so far to them, would now have perswaded them to alter and lay aside those things which yield matter of offence to any of the same perswasion with themselves. For surely none will be so uncharitable towards those of his own Profession, as to think there is not as much reason to yield in compliance with them as with the Papists. Further, Lloyds *State Worthies* in *Quarto*, p. 998. in the Life of Archbishop *Laud*, he brings in that Bishop, disliking Mr. *Calvins* words of Censure, *Tolerabiles ineptias*, who knew not said the Bishop the temper of the Nation, requiring then not what was absolutely best, but most conveniently good. And thus our Reformers did what was best in their days, or most conveniently good : Even as *Aristotles* Organon might be best in the days of old, but now the case is altered, and the reading Lectures out of that Book is commonly with less profit, than other Logicks would be ; the case may be applicable to some things at least in the Common-Prayers, if not the Worship it self, as not done so much to edifying, &c. And the Reformers reason for their Imposition ceaseth, which was the enlargement of the Church, by gaining and winning as many as could be, to our Communion : The Papists came to this Worship till the 10th or 12th year of Queen *Elizabeths* Reign : But now it hinders and shuts some of our Reformed Protestant Brethren out of our Church ; and so the reason which made at first for the imposition, maketh as much now for the abrogation of some things therein.

I say again, not a dishonour to our first Reformers ; because a due acknowledgment may be made of their worth, and the work of Reformation in their days, that it was the best, the fittest, or at least praise-worthy. Our Forefathers, who knew what Popery and a Mass book was by sad Experience, rejoiced, that they had Prayers found for the substance, and purged from the Corruptions of the Mass book, and looked upon it as a wonderful Blessing from Heaven, and were thankful. And if somewhat be inconvenient, and less suitable to the genius of the people in these days, not sinful and unlawful, or unmeet for good Christians to joyn in ; I presume no dishonour will

be done to our first Reformers ; who, as several are apt to imagine, if they had lived in these days, would have taken at least some few things away for the enlargement of our Communion.

Thirdly, Gods Honour is greater than that of our first Reformers ; but God is highly dishonoured by this Worship, as it is at present performed, carelessly, negligently, under contempt by many, and by most, I am afraid, little regarded, as to the devout use of it. And the Question must end in this ; whether God will be more Honoured by the continuance of the Common Prayers, as at present ; or whether (with Submission to the Wisdom of our Governours) it may not admit of an alteration in some things for the better ? Whether it is like to do most good to Souls, and best attain the ends of Worship, in its present use, or any Amendments or Concessions for a Comprehension : So be it, Gods Worship be done to edifying by the greater part of our Congregations, in the City and Country both, God will have the Glory, and all good Christians will be satisfied.

Another Objection. *What need of a Comprehension ? Are we not as well without it ? What shall we be the better for it ?*

To which I Answer ; There are no doubt a Thousand Blessings of Heaven and Earth accompanying that Church state, which like the Heavenly Society is at Unity in it self. If there were any Community here upon Earth that enjoyed a perfection of Love and Peace, how ambitious would Mortals be to enter into that Peaceful Society. But the nearest approach that we can make unto it is by a *Philadelphian* state. An Heavenly thing is Unity, as *Nazianzen* well observed, *Pugnas & dissidia nescire Deum & Angelos* ; No broyls, no jars in Heaven, nothing but Peace there, and it is a kind of Heaven upon Earth, when Brethren dwell together in Unity, *Psal. 133. Behold how good and pleasant a thing it is, &c.* Pleasant to behold, a lovely sight to see an Army marching in an exact order ; and as amiable and acceptable to hear people of the same Parish, Town, City, and Kingdom pouring out their joint requests, with one Mouth, and one Heart, praying for the Peace and Prosperity of *Zion*. O the Benefits of Union are unspeakably great ! I profess my self to stand admiring the vanity of this contentious World, that values such a State

How wonderful an unity ! in unity of mind and heart being the most

no more. Hear what men of the most serene temper, men that aspired after it, if it were possible to attain to some good degree of it, or somewhat like it, by living Peaceably with all men, and by being Peacemakers.

Benefits of Peace and Unity.

Lord Bacons *Essays*, p. 13. *Speaking of Peace in the Church*: It containeth infinite Blessings, it establisheth Faith, it kindleth Charity, and it turneth the Labours of Writing and Reading of Controversies, into Treatises of Mortification and Devotion.

Bishop Andrews Sermons, p. 672. The Spirit dwells not but where Unity and Love is. — Think of this seriously, and set it down, that at Salem is his Tabernacle; and Salem is Peace; and so the Fathers read it, in pace factus est locus ejus, make that place for him, and he will say, here is my Rest, here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein.

Mr. Vertues Plea for Peace. Christ hath said, *Blessed are the Peacemakers, they shall be called the Children of God*. Matth. 5. 9. As we would share in this Blessedness, let it be our study. *Item*, p. 51. Would we see good, and enjoy long days, would we be sure that we have that Willom which is from above, be peaceable, wrangle not for trifles, contend not about uncertainties.

Dr. Goods Firmians & Dublinianus, p. 165. It is not to be doubted, but that Peace and Unity, and Love among our selves, would much dishearten those restless enemies of our Church and State, and cause Religion and Primitive Christianity to flourish in our miserable divided Nation; while that time, which is now spent in vain Wranglings and unchristian Contentions, would be better employed

in devout Prayer, Holy Meditation, and Mortification of our Corruptions, in Duties of Piety towards Almighty God, and of Love, Mercy and Charity one towards another.

Mr. Jekyls Sermons on Jer. 5. 29. p. 30. Next to Peace with God, without which all other security will prove deceitful, Unity amongst our selves is certainly the most effectual thing to the making of us an happy people ; and till that be attained, we may possibly be quiet, but we shall never be safe.

I shall conclude this with an excellent Speech of that Pious and Peaceable Prelate, Dr. *Reynolds*, in his Sermon of *Self-denial*, towards the end ; It were worth not only our Fasting and Prayer ; but our Studying, our Sweating, our Bleeding, our Dying, to recover Peace to the Church, and Unity amongst Brethren again.

I could argue also from the mischievous effects and consequences of our Divisions, that the case of our Church must be very sad and deplorable while our Divisions and Confusions in matters of Religion continue. *Malorum ilias*, a multitude of evils throng in upon a Church through its unchristian Divisions. A divided state is an unhappy state ; it is a state of Separation from God as well as from their Brethren.

Bishop Andrews Sermons, p. 672. And what is there would sooner grieve him, (the Holy Spirit) and make him to quit us, than discord or disunion ? Among divided men or minds he will not dwell ; not but where Unity and Love is. They may talk of the Spirit without these in vain. To say Truth, who would be hired to dwell in *Mesheck*, *Psal. 120. 5.* where nothing is but continual jars and jangles ? Such places, such men are even as *Torrida Zona*, not habitable by the Spirit, by this Spirit : But for the Spirit of Division, *ut habiet inter eos Damon*, a fit place for the Devil to dwell among such. And surely he that hath an heart affected with any sense of the miserable case of our divided Church (though blessed be God not in so lamentable a case now as in former years) he that hath any concern for it must needs be convinced that we are not well, cannot be well in our multiplicity of Divisions.

The Lord Chancellor Hides Speech to the Parliament, 1660. He calls it a sad Consideration, that must make every Religious Heart to bleed, to see Religion, which should be the strongest of Obligations, and cement of Affection, and Brotherly kindness and Compassion, made by the perverse wranglings of passionate and froward Men, the Ground of all Animosity, Hatred, Malice, and Revenge. My Lords and Gentlemen, saith he, this Disquisition hath cost the King many a sigh, many a sad hour, when he hath considered the almost irreparable Reproach the Protestant Religion hath undergone from the Divisions and Distractions, which have been so porsorious in this Kingdom.

Bishop Saunderson's Sermons, ad Aulam, Sermon. 9. Sect. 30. Odious to God, and grievous to every Godly Man it is, when such Voices as these are heard in the Church, I am of *Paul's*, and I am of *Cephus*, and I of *Apollo*.

Mr. Baxter in the Life of Sir Matthew Hale saith, that he much lamented that so many Ministers were divided, the Church weakened, Papiests strengthened, the cause of Love and Piety greatly wronged and hindred by the present differences about Conformity.

Doctor Good's Firmianus & Dubitantius, &c. p. 152; 'Tis indeed much to be lamented that we should quarrel about Mint and Cummin, to the prejudice of the more weighty and material duties, and scandal of our Religion.

Causes of the decay of Christian Piety, p. 424. Amidst all our importunate pretences to Piety, if there be indeed any such thing amongst us, methinks, it should give us some relentings, make us sadly consider, what a deplorable Condition we have brought that very Religion into by our Divisions.

Bishop of Salisbury's Exhortation to Peace and Unity, p. 30. There have arisen among us such heats, so much bitterness, so violent an aversion to one another, that it must needs beget great Grief, and sad Apprehensions in all that look on, and judge impartially.

Principles and Practices of some Mod. &c. p. 4. It pains me to the Heart when I consider, to what a prodigious height about matters in Religion.

Religion our feuds are grown, and how utterly averse the too many Sects and Parties we are crumbled into, are, to entertain thoughts of Peace and Accommodation.

Uniry of the Catholick Church, p. 1. Whoſoever with an Impartial Eye, and a truly Religious concern for the Honour of God, the Credit of the Goſpel, and the Salvation of Men, looks into the State of Chriſtendom, he will ſcarce find any greater cauſe of ſorrowful Reflections, than from the many Diviſions and Animofities which have diſtracted and ſeparated its Parts.

Mr. Wakes Sermon on Rom. 15. 5, 6, 7. I do not believe there is any good Chriſtian ſo little affected with thoſe unhappy Diviſions, under which the Church at this day labours, as not both heartily to deplore them, and to think that nothing could be too much, that might innocently be done on all hands for the redreſſing of them. And to ſhow that theſe Worthy Men had cauſe to complain, and bewail our Diviſions, I ſhall Exemplify the Evils.

It is indeed a ſad ſight to ſee the Church of Chriſt divided into ſo many ſectary parties, and to ſee the ſame people who are united in the ſame faith, and who are united in the ſame love, yet who are divided in their opinions, and who are divided in their practices.

It is indeed a ſad ſight to ſee the Church of Chriſt divided into ſo many ſectary parties, and to ſee the ſame people who are united in the ſame faith, and who are united in the ſame love, yet who are divided in their opinions, and who are divided in their practices.

It is indeed a ſad ſight to ſee the Church of Chriſt divided into ſo many ſectary parties, and to ſee the ſame people who are united in the ſame faith, and who are united in the ſame love, yet who are divided in their opinions, and who are divided in their practices.

It is indeed a ſad ſight to ſee the Church of Chriſt divided into ſo many ſectary parties, and to ſee the ſame people who are united in the ſame faith, and who are united in the ſame love, yet who are divided in their opinions, and who are divided in their practices.

The Mischief of our Divisions.

THE First Mischief promoting Atheisme, Arch-Bishop *Grindal* in his *Fair Warning*, Part 2. Edit. 1663, expressed his great fear of two things, Atheism and Popery; and both arising out of our needless differences. By these the Enemies of our Religion gain this, that nothing can be established by Law in the Protestant Religion, whole every part is not opposed by some or other of her own Professors; so that things continuing loose and confused, the Papists have their Opportunity to urge their way, which is attended with Order and Government; And our Religion continuing thus distracted and divided, some vile Wretches lay hold on the Arguments, on one side to confute the other, and so hope at last to destroy all.

Judge Hales's Discourse of Religion p. 49. When Men see so much Heat and Passion, so much Fervour and Contention, such Reproaches and Revilings, such Exasperations of Authority on either Party, such mutual Prosecutions one of another, that more could not possibly be done between Dissenters in those points, which both agree to be Fundamental; Atheistical Spirits are apt to conclude, that probably those points that both sides supposed to be of greater moment, are *Ejusdem Farina*, as those in Contest, which all Men take to be small and inconsiderable.

Mr. Hooker's Ecclesiastical Politie, p. 18. Speaking of Atheistical persons, by our Contentions their Irreligious Humour is much strengthened: Also by the hot pursuit of lower Controversies among Men professing Religion, and agreeing in the principal Foundation thereof, they conceive hope, that about the highest Principles themselves, time will cause Alteration to grow.

Abner,

Abner's Plea for Accommodation, p. 41. It will cast a scandal on Religion, it will open the Mouths of the Adversaries of the Truth : *The Name of God is blasphem'd among the Gentiles through you*, saith the Apostle, *Rom. 2. 24.* The worst sort among them scoff at it, it is meat and drink to them : And the better sort are stagger'd by it, discouraged from coming within the pale of the Church, when they observe Christians, as Contentious, as Pagans ; Believers as quarrelsome, as Infidels.

Unity of Catholick Christians : The many Divisions and Animosities, which have distracted and separated the parts of Christendom, these have opened the Mouths, and whet the Tongues of its professed Enemies to Reviling and Railings, and Prophane Scoffs against our Blessed Lord and Saviour, and his Holy Religion, and stifled the first thoughts of admitting the most Convincing Truths to a debate among *Jews, Turks, or Pagans*, and stop't their Ears against the wisest Charmes : To no one cause can we more reasonably impute the small progress which Christianity hath made in the World for a Thousand years past. The same contents have a pernicious influence at home upon the Faith and Manners of those within the Pale of the Church : Men are hereby too soon tempted into some degree of Scepticism about very material points of Christian Doctrine, in which they observe so many to differ among themselves.

Bishop Hacket on Acts 15. 39. Where many Sects spring up, it calls the Truth more into question ; and the fewer Profelytes will be gained.

Secondly, By bringing Men to a Lukewarmness and Indifferency in the great things of Religion.

Bishop Whitgift's Letter to the Council, in Fullers Hist. L. 9. That in King Edwards Time, and in the beginning of Queen Elizabeths before the heat of these Contentions, the Gospel mightily prevailed. But since this Schism and Division the contrary Effects have happened.

Design of Christian. p. 236. It is too visibly apparent to be denied, that those who have such a scalding hot Zeal, [or contend so earnestly] either for, or against things of no certainty, and no necessity

cessity, are many of them, as their Predecessors the Pharisees were, in the very other Extream, as to not a few of the weightiest matters of Religion.

Conformists Plea for the Nonconformists, Part 4. pag. 17; It renders the Labours of the Worthiest suspected and despised [by the contrary-minded.] The most useful, profitable, searching Books which the World hath most need of, are not as much as look'd into by many, but rejected, because the Books of F — (as they are called;) Yea, more; if a Conformist have the Name of F — some of our Church-P — will not come nigh the door-posts of Wisdom.

Mr. Kidder's Sermons, 1 Pet 3. 11. We quarrel for Trifles, and neglect our unquestionable Duty to God and Man.

Doctor Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury, Matth. 12. 25. p. 5. The ill Effects of this Zeal [or Contentiousness] upon our selves will be, That as this Temper grows upon us, all our inward seriousness will in a great measure abate, and turn merely to a Form; And with that, many other Sins will creep in upon us; we will bear with many ill things in others, because they are of our Party, whom otherwise we would detest for their ill Lives, and by Conversing much with them, we will contract at least a Familiarity with their Vices, and perhaps imagine, That by our rage and heat we offer up some acceptable Sacrifice to God, to compensate for our other Disorders.

Causes of Decay of Piety, p. 251. When bitter Zeal was once fermented, the Orthodoxy or Heresie of Lives became soon Terms our-dated, and Men were measured only by Opinions. Item p. 301. They are not much discompoled, to see Men of no Religion, 'tis only the having one different from their own that makes their Indignation.

Mr. Cook's Sermons on Rom. 12. 18. p. 24; What a siding is there with this and the other Zealous and Conscientious Sect, even by those that have neither Zeal, nor Conscience, but are Deriders of both, and of strict Holiness in all sorts of Professors.

Appendix to the third part of the Friendly Debate, p. 143; Doctor Jackson tells us the first ground of his dislike to the chief Solicitors of Reformation in our Church, was the deformity of their Zeal; not moving them to redress known Enormities of the Common-wealth, much more material; and much more nearly concerning the Advancement of the Gospel, than those doubtful Controversies of Formality, about which they strove.

Bishop Willkins on Rom. 14. 17, 18; Let a Man but indifferently look round about him, amongst all the kinds of Parties in our times, even those who in his own judgment he esteems the best, and then say; Whether both our Common Peace, and the Power of Religion hath not suffered exceedingly upon the account of our Zeal in lesser matters?

Another Mischief, it destroys Charity.

Doctor Steward's England's Case, p. 26: In such Divisions as these, Men are extremely apt to forget all Bonds of Peace, and for possession sometimes of a little supposed Truth, quit indeed their whole state of Charity.

Mr. Kidder's Sermons, 1 Pet. 3. 11. We do indeed fiercely contend with each other, but it is because we want Charity: We neglect that plain Duty, whilst we are fond of some Opinion of our own, which is often false, and at best but doubtful.

Prof. to Usher's Body of Divinity. Men falling into Sects and Schisms, break the Bond of Love, and fall off from the Communion of Saints, as though it were no Article of their Creed; and being in Love with their own New Tenets, they contend more for them, than any Fundamental Truths, and hate, Malign most bitterly and Uncharitably all those that differ from them in their Opinions, though never so Conscientious and Religious, as though they professed not the same Faith, yet, served not the same God, nor believed in the same Christ.

Causes of the Decay of Christian Piety, p. 204. It is apparent in too many, That they are apt to confine even the Common Offices of Humanit

Humanity to their own Sect; and others who do not so, yet shew so great partiality in dispensing them, so as discovers that the Name of Christian is not half so charming as that of their own particular Faction.

Mr. Cook's Serm. Rom. 12. 18. How dreadful is it to consider what we may plainly observe, that Dissention, Hatred, and Rancour is not so violent and Irreconcilable betwixt Extream Opposites, who dissent utterly (as Pagans and Christians for Example) as it commonly is betwixt subordinate Professors, who agree upon Generals, and in the main Substance, but dissent in Particulars. Those of the Church of Rome this day rather Tolerate, do not so extremely hate, a Turk, a Jew, a Pagan, as they do a Protestant; and some Protestants to be quit with them, do in affection and kind usage too plainly prefer a *Heathen or Mahometan* before them.

Judge Hales's Discourses of Relig. p. 37. It often comes to pass that not only the Common Bond of Charity, and of Christian Love is broken between the Professors of the same Substantials in Christianity, but there is most ordinarily much more Severity, and Persecution and Implacableness, and Irreconcilableness, more Endeavours to undermine, and supplant, and disgrace Dissenters, more Scorns, and vilifying, and reproach, and Insolence one towards another in their vicissitudes of Advantage, than there is between Men of the most loose and profane Lives, and Professors of Christianity; between Orthodox and Hereticks; nay, between Christians, and Turks, or Infidels many times.

Bishop of Salisburys Exhortation to Peace, p. 111. Luther and Zuinglius difference about the Sacrament has raised such an alienation, that in many places the Lutherans are no less, and in some more fierce against the Calvinists, than against Papists.

Bishop Reynold's Brotherly Agreement, p. 8. Through the prevalence of Corruption, the Affections of good Men so dissenting are often Alienated and Estranged one from another.

Glanvill's Cambolick Charity, p. 8. Though I see never so much eagerness for an Opinion, or heat for an Indifferent Circumstance,

out the Conscience of Christian Love, I shall never call that forward-
ness for those little things, *Zeal* or *Religion*; yea, though those warm
Men should sacrifice their Lives to their beloved Trifles, I should not
think them Martyrs, but fear rather, that they went from one fire to
another, and a worse, as 1 Cor. 13. 3.

Mr. Cook's Sermons on Rom. 12. 18. p. 3. Though some di-
vided Parties may in their several ways exercise many Acts of true
and substantial Worship; yet whilst the Members thereof retain in
their hearts any unpeaceable Disposition, or bitter Envy (though
they call it *Zeal*) against another Party, all the Effects of their Reli-
gion must necessarily be null and void; because in our Religion we can
find no sort of dispensation for an Uncharitable Temper.

Glanvil's Catholick Char. p. 55, 56. If therefore we are Friends
to Christian Love, let us avoid, and oppose this its most fatal Enemy;
and consider that we should exercise our *Zeal* about the necessary
certain things; and our *Charity* about the rest. *That Divisions are Ruin of a Church*
Bucer; I see, with what Art Satan doth resist, *First*, the Reforma-
tion; *While* he goeth about to stir up so many pernicious Conten-
tions, as well in Doctrine, as Rites. For surely, except we remove
so manifest dishonourings of God, whereby the whole Kingdom of
God may be renewed. Oh how intolerable Wrath of God shall
be kindled against this Realm! In another place, With this crafty
flight hath that Ancient Enemy driven miserable *Germany* unto these
present Calamities, wherewith they be now oppressed, (in King *Edward*
the VI. dayes) God forbid, *Christ Jesus*, I say, our only Saviour,
forbid, that he prevail against *England* with this crafty subtilty.

Bishop Andrew's Sermon, p. 913. Let us begin with the motion
for Fire from Heaven upon the *Samaritans*, *Luke 9. 55.* Let us begin
with that which was the beginning of all this quarrel, dissent in Reli-
gion between the *Samaritan* and the *Jew*. We see the fruit of it here,
and what Spirit it makes Men of, mutual and mortal hatred breaking
forth upon every occasion. And these two the *Samaritans* and the *Jews*
made not an end of it, till it made an end of them. In *Josephus* you shall
see

see in the days of *Claudian* (*Cumanus* then Deputy) the very like quarrel to this here, upon the very same occasion, taken up wholly by the *Zelota*, and pursued hard, opened the way to the *Jews* War, which never ended till the utter rooting out, and desolation of them both.

Injunct. of K. James I. to the Bishops, 1626. One thing there is, which proves a great hinderance of this State, and not continued amongst the people without great offence against God, detriment both to Church and State, and our great disservice in this and all other business: It is the breach of Unity which is grown too great and common amongst all sorts of men: The danger of this goes far; for in all States it has made way for enemies to enter.

Mr. Hookers Answer to Mr. Travers Supplicat. p. 30. There can come nothing of Contention, but the natural waste of the parties contending, till a common Enemy dance in the ashes of them both.

Halls Works, Bishop of Norwich, p. 413. If we desire the grief of our common Mother, the languishing of the Gospel, the extirpation of Religion, the loss of Posterity, the advantage of our Adversaries, which way could these be effected more, than by our Divisions?

Mr. Vertues Plea for Peace, p. 25. Falling out among our selves we stand aloof off one from another; suffering our selves to be devoured by the common Foe, while we look on: Yea happily we shall be ready to act one against another, and so to save the Enemy a labour; as *Moab* against *Ammon*, and *Ammon* against *Moab*, and *Edom* against both, sheathing their Swords each in other; so that *Jehosaphat* and his *Jews* needed not to strike a stroke, *2 Chron. 20. 3. Isa. 9. 21. Gal. 5. 15.* It is a Dutch device, and a good one, to this purpose, of two earthen pots swimming on the water, *frangimur si collidimur*, we are broken all to pieces if we clash one against another. *Idem*, p. 31. Besides that God doth often punish breaches and divisions in the Church among Christians, by raising up some storm against them, which may teach them better to agree; we being in this too like to Sheep, which on a fair Sun-shine day are scattered each from other upon the Mountains; but a storm brings them together: So doth *Eusebius* relate, that the Church enjoyed much peace and freedom immediately

diately before the Persecution raised against it by *Dioctesun*; and making no better use of it than to fall afunder into Divisions and Factious Contentions, instantly God took a course by way of punishment to cover the Daughter of *Zion* with a Cloud in his Anger, and to cast down from Heaven to Earth the beauty of *Israel*, and not to remember his footstool in the day of his Anger, setting up the Right-hand of his Churches enemies, and making their adversaries to rejoyce. *Lam.* 2. 1. *Pfal.* 39. 42.

Mr. Ward of Ipswich's Sermons, p. 253. Charity, Charity is the builder of Churches: Strife about trifles hath wasted many famous ones, and placed the Temple of *Mahomet* where the Golden Candlestick was wont to stand. We pity the former Ages contending about leavened and unleavened Bread, keeping of *Easter*, Fasting on Sundays, the future Ages will do the like by us.

Pygots Abners Plea for Accommodation in 43. p. 33. Take heed, your private dissensions do not expose you as a prey to the common adversary. I remember the dying Fathers admonition to his Sons: Having call'd them all together, he caus'd a Faggot to be brought into the Room, and commanded the stoutest of them to break it; they tryed one after another, but none of them could do it, then he bade them undo the band, and take them stick by stick, and so they snapped them afunder like a twined thread: Thus shall it be with you, my Sons, (saith the Old Man) when I am dead, if you continue united and knit together in the bond of Peace and Love, no Enemies shall be able to hurt you; but if you once break the bond, and fall into differences among your selves, you'll presently be broken to pieces, and come to nothing. *Item*, p. 42. The wild Boar of the Forest, I mean the *Turk*, had never made such inroads into *Christendom*, had it not been for the dissension of Christian Brethren.

Erney Burna. Upon the Rebellion in Ireland, Ejac. 3. Because we have not more loved thy Truth, and practiced in Charity, thou hast suffered a Spirit of error and bitterness, of mutual and mortal hatred to arise among us.

Bishop Reynolds Broth. Agreement, p. 18. Cites holy *Cyprian*, who in his time looked upon it as one great cause of that sore Persecution,

cution, which God sent upon the Church : Had Unanimity and Peace, said he, been amongst the Brethren, we had long ago obtained our Petitions from Divine Mercy, neither had we been thus long tossed with those Tempests, which endanger our Faith and Salvation : *Imo vero nec venissent Fratribus hac mala, si in unum fraternitas fuisset animata.*

Bishop Hacket on Acts 15. 39. p. 8, 9. The passage is well known about *Constance* the Great, how he remov'd from his Palace in the *East*, because every corner of the Imperial City was filled with adverse disputations about Religion ; much more you may presume that God will depart from that Church, where the flames of notorious discords are

Causes of decay of Christian Piety, p. 304. As to the extirpation of the *Eastern* Churches, he that shall examine the Records of those Times will have cause to say, their janglings and divisions were not only in a Moral and Divine, but even in a proper natural sense the Instruments of it, the *Turk* only coming in at those breaches which themselves have made.

Glanvells Cash. Charity, p. 17. The greatest evils that have, or can happen to the Church, have been the effects of the decay of Charity, and of those intestine divisions that have grown up in it : From these she hath always suffered more, than from external Persecutions. The flames within have consumed her, when those from without have only sing'd her garments.

Bishop of Salisbury's Exhort. to Peace and Union, on Matth. 12. 25. p. 3. There is nothing that defeats the end of Religion more, and doth more naturally lead to all manner of sin and impieties, which must end in Temporal as well as Eternal ruine, than our Divisions. *Page. 9.* In Divisions either party will be so intent on their little designs, that the whole may perish ; and they will bite and devour one another, till they are either consumed one of another, or made an easie Conquest to those that both see and improve all their advantages.

Item, Exhort. p. 10, 11. The *Africans* continued quarrelling about *Cecilian* and his ordainers, till the *Vandals* came and destroyed both

both the one and the other. *Item*, p. 11. And can we think without astonishment, that the difference of the Procession of the Holy Ghost could ever have rent the *Greek* and *Latin* Churches so violently, one from another, that the *Latins* rather than assist the other, look'd on till they were destroyed by the *Ottoman* Family, which has ever since been so terrible a Neighbour to the rest of *Europe*.

Mr. Hesketh on Lam 3. 20, 21. p. 25. It were seasonable to have made some reflections upon the unchristian heats and unreasonable differences that are among us, things that render us not only sinners, but great fools, and plain contrivers for our own Ruine. For these evils, that will destroy us alone, and by their own weight sink us into destruction. Divided Societies last not long, the experience of all Ages confirms it for a Truth; and I do not see what reason we have to expect an exemption from the common fate.

Dr. Mores Mystery of Iniquity, p. 554. What harm is it to preface so well of the Reformation, as that after the decursion of the years of their Childhood, God will ripen them into a more Manly sense of the great and indispensable Duties of the Gospel; that he will not tolerate nor connive any longer at their Childish squabbling about Nut-shells, Counters and Cherry-stones; and menace them even with destruction, if they leave not off their animosities and asperities of mind about toys and trifles, and hold fast to the Royal Law of Love? *If ye bite and worry one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.* Gal. 5. 15.

Mr. Hancocks Sermon on Luke 19. 42. If the judgments of God, which we have already groaned under, cannot; sure the dangers that threaten us and our Religion, might help to abate our heats, and suppress our differences: Did not Christianity decay in the Church of *Corinth* as their Schisms and Factions increased? *Pag.* 31. Were not the former Conquests of these Nations, the effects of our own Divisions? God grant that saying may never be applied to us, which was used of our Fore-Fathers, that whilst they severally quarrel'd among themselves, they were all overcome by the common Enemy. *Item*, They are convinced, that a number of petty Sects and divided Interests cannot long maintain their ground against the *Roman* Forces.

Mr. Cooks Sermon on Rom. 12. 18. p. 4. Were it not for that security, the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it; (that is the Church) the unhappy contentions about it; (the worst of Devils would soon hasten its destruction)

Mr. Jekylls Sermon on Jer. 5. 29. p. 21. But there is one thing, which if not speedily prevented, will before we are aware, let in that which we so much fear, and cry out against; (*viz.* Popery) and which perhaps too too many of us, more or less, may be accessary to; I mean those unnatural heats and divisions amongst our selves, amidst which, though we are not altogether swerved from the Form, yet we are strangely degenerated from the true Spirit and Power of Godliness and Christianity. — How sad the effects and consequence of these heart-burnings and animosities, unchristian strifes and debates will be, I am afraid to think of! *Item*, p. 25. We are distracting our own Devotions, yea and provoking (I had almost said devouring) one another, whilst our Adversaries in the day they look for (which God grant may never come) will make no difference, but swallow us up together.

Principles and Practices, p. 10. of Ep. It is high time to be reconciled to Moderation and Sobriety, to lay aside our uncharitable, and therefore unchristian heats against each other, and to throw water upon those flames, that threaten our destruction, (and but for Gods infinite Mercy, would have effected it before now) instead of adding more fuel unto it.

Mr. Kidder on 1 Per. 3. 11. p. 29. The several Sects and Quarrels of the Jews among themselves, and the fury of their Zealots, were but a prologue to their miserable destruction.

Bishop Taylors Coll. of Discourses, Ep. before Liberty of Proph. For my own particular, I cannot but expect that God in his Justice should enlarge the bounds of the Turkish Empire, or some other way punish Christians, by reason of their pernicious disputings about things unnecessary, undeterminable and unprofitable.

Causes of the Decay of Christian Piety, p. 107. It is the usual Economy of Divine Justice to make our Crimes our Punishment.

and to give us up to those ills, which were at first our own depraved choice. And God knows, we have too much reason to fear this may be our case; that we who have so perfectly violated all the bonds of Unity, wantonly wrangled our selves out of all inclinations to Peace, should never be able to resume them. *Item*, p. 428. This, alas! as it is the fearfullest, so is it the probablest issue of our wild contentions; such as nothing but the miraculous effluxes of Divine Clemency can avert.

To conclude, as well we may, with this as an undoubted Truth, from Mr. *Kidders* Sermon on 1 *Pet.* 3. 11. p. 22. These Contentions have done more mischief than all the Persecutions put together; more have fallen, and more dangerously this way, than by the Swords of Tyrants and avowed Enemies of our Religion.

Arguments for taking the Ceremonies away,
or leaving the Use of them indifferent;
especially the Sign of the Cross.

Here is the most proper place to premise somewhat concerning the Lawfulness of Ceremonies, least I should in any thing which follows be thought to condemn my own practice, in point of Conformity to these Ceremonies.

As to Kneeling at the Sacrament, I think the Rubrick should fastidie Persons; it speaks very plainly. It is hereby declared, that no Adoration is intended, or ought to be done, either unto the Sacramental Bread and Wine, there Bodily received, or unto any Corporal Preference of Christs Natural Flesh and Blood. For the Sacramental Bread and Wine remain still in their very Natural Substances,

and therefore may not be Adored, (for that were Idolatry to be abhorred of all faithful Christians) and the Natural Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ are in Heaven, &c.

Mr. Bayns Christian Letters, p. 201. Kneeling is neither an occasion, nor by participation Idolatry. Kneeling never bred Bread-Worship, and our Doctrine of the Sacrament known to all the World, doth free us from suspicion of Adoration in it. Thus be though a Nonconformist,

Mr. Tombs Theodulia, p. 168. That whatsoever Gesture our Saviour used it doth not oblige us, because the Gesture seems not to have been of choice used by Christ. 2. Because *St. Paul* omits the Gesture, which he would not have done, if it had been binding. 3. He mentions the Night, and calls it the Lords Supper; and if the Time be not necessary, much less the Gesture. 4. If the Gesture doth oblige, then Christians must use the self-same that Christ used, *i. e.* Lying down or Leaning, &c. *Mr. Baxter* in his *Christian Directory* (I think speaking of the sacrament) tells us, he thinks *Mr. Payboates* Book in defence of *Kneeling* to be unanswerable.

As to the Surplice; *Platina* mentions it to be brought in very early into the Church, in the days of the good Bishops of *Rome*, *Anno Domini* 259, by *Stephen* a Martyr under *Decius* the Emperour; And none can deny but that in the Apostles days, after Baptism (the Baptized in those hot Countries of the *East*, being commonly at least dipped or plunged in the Water with their naked Bodies) the persons Baptized put on new white Vestments to shew the Purity of a Christian: Whence the Lords day after *Easter* (which *Easter* was their chief time of Baptizing) was called *Dominica in Albis*, the Lords day in White. *Mr. Leighs Annotations on the New Testament* tell you those expressions of putting on the Lord Jesus, and putting off the Old Man have allusion to the Garments. *Peter Martyr* speaks in his Answer to Bishop *Hooper's* Letter: The Defenders of this Ceremony may pretend some honest and just signification, and *Zeppernus* himself, (though no Friend to the Sign of the Cross in the Baptismal Office, as *Mr. Sprin* tells us in his *Cassander Anglicanus*) speaking of the Papists, saith thus; We read nothing of the Superstitious Habits in the Monuments of Antiquity, except only of the White Vesture; *Qua usi*

sunt sane superstitione in signum & Commune factorem honestatis vira.
 So that if it were a significative Ceremony (as it is not in the Church
 of Englands use of it) yet in their judgments the use of it might be
 innocent.

Bishop Taylors Ductor Dubitantium, p. 668. Great Reason have
 we to honour the Wisdom of the Church of *England*, which hath in
 all her Offices retained but one Ritual or Ceremony that is not of Di-
 vine Ordinance, or Apostolical Practice, and that is the Cross at Bap-
 tism: Which, though it be a significant Ceremony, and of no other
 use, yet as it is a compliance with the Antient Church, so is it very
 innocent in it self, and being one alone is not troublesome [or burthen-
 some]. Archbishop *Whitgift* said, the Surplice was not enjoyed as
 a significant Ceremony. The Canon about the Surplice mentioneth
 nothing of using it for signification of purity or unspotted innocency.
 We do not wear it as monitory or instructive to keep the inner man
 pure and clean, but as a Garment of use in the Antient Church, and
 transmitted down from them to us, and retained at our Reformation:
 And some urge it to be decent, and no ways unbecoming a Minister of
 the Gospel, who may wear certainly White as lawfully as Black,
 without placing Holyness or Unholyness in any Garment. If we see
 not so great reason for the imposition or continuance, yet we may see
 sufficient reason for the submission. It is not used by us as by the Pa-
 pists, who must have it hallowed or consecrated by Praying over it,
 that it may defend him that wears it from the Devil. They use it
 indeed with a Superstitious opinion of Holyness, but we have no Con-
 secrating Surplices, nor any such opinion that it is a fence against the
 Devil, or preservative from his assaults and temptations.

Several Nonconformists have said, they would be content to Preach
 the Gospel in a Fools coat rather than be silent; as the Famous
Mr. Daille of *France* being asked his judgment by some Nonconfor-
 mists of *England*, said (as I am told by a *French* Minister, and that
 he had seen it mentioned in a Book wrote by one of our Bishops) That
 our Ceremonies were good, and before he would make a rent in the
 Church for such things as the Surplice, &c. If the King of *France*
 would give him leave to Preach at *Paris*, (which the King forbid him)
 he would Preach, though it were in a Fools coat.

As to the Lawfulness of the Sign of the Cross at Baptism, It is, I Baptize, I Baptize thee in the Name of the Father, &c. which is all that is Essential to Baptism, or the Substance of that Ordinance: Then it follows, We receive this [Baptized] Child into the Congregation of Christs Flock, as the Privilege. Baptism makes him a Member of the Catholick Church, and particularly of that Church into which he is Baptized: But the owning and receiving into Communion is the Churches Act. Then follows, and sign him with the Sign of the Cross in token, &c. as significative, and with the words declarative of that Duty, which he is obliged and bound unto by Baptism, to own the Faith of Christ Crucified, &c. And though the Words are, In token that he shall not be ashamed to own, &c. It is only in the Judgment of Charity, what the Church hopeth and expecteth from him hereafter, when he is come to years to know Good and Evil, his Faith, Profession, and Obedience to the Trinity, according to his Baptism. And thus Dr. Rowes in his Subscription with Explanation of his meaning, allowed by King James the First, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, and declared to be the sense of the Church of England: Where the Book saith, And do sign him with the Sign of the Cross, in token, &c. I understand, saith he, that Book not to mean, That the Sign of the Cross hath any Vertue in it to effect or further this Duty, but only to intimate and express by that Ceremony (by which the Ancients did avow their profession of Christ Crucified) what the Congregation hopeth and expecteth hereafter from that Infant: And therefore also when the Twentieth Canon saith, That the Infant is by that Sign Dedicated unto the Service of Christ, I understand that Dedication to import, not a real Consecration of the Child, which was done in Baptism it self; but only a Ceremonial Declaration of that Dedication, like as the Priest is said to make clean the Leper, whose being clean he only declared.

There was undoubtedly a lawful use of the Cross in some Primitive Christians, while they lived among professed Jews and Heathens, Enemies of the Cross of Christ, as *Phil.* 3. 18. upbraiding the Christians that their God dyed upon a Cross. It began at his Crucifixion, *Matth.* 27. 41, 42; *The Chief Priests mocking him with the Scribes and Elders said, If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the Cross, and we will believe him.* The more others scoffed at the Christians for their Crucified Saviour, with the greater Courage, Resolution, and Constancy

Constancy did the Christians own and make profession of him. And this was a sign professing Christ, which at the sight of *Jews* and *Infidels*, in the Markets, and any where else was of common use among the Christians, used at their Meals many times, and Translated to Baptism. When the Empire became Christian, *Constantine* used it, and others in their Ensigns of War, to signify, Christ Crucified was the God they owned, and expected Victory in Battel from him. In their Coats of Arms, in their Coynes at this day, it is used as of Old, to shew the Religion of the Persons, or the Countries, that they were Christians. If any Object that was a Civil use of it, and not Religious, I say it was of Religious signification there. Yet indeed with *Peter Martyr*, for mine own part, I wish that all things may be done simplicissime, most free from Humane mixtures in the Worship of God; Again, Its signification and use is, *ad hominem*, and not *ad Deum*. For first, If it were permanent, and imprinted on the Forehead (which in Scripture is used to signify boldness and confidence, in a good, and in all ill sense, as *Ezek. 3. 8. Jer. 3. 3.* And so the sign of the Cross made there signifieth of the Child boldness, Christian Courage and Confidence, that he shall not be ashamed, &c.) it would signify to Men, and not to God; unto Christians, that he was one of their number. Secondly, The use of it among the Primitive Christians was to signify to Christians among themselves, or more especially to Jews and Heathens their Christian Profession. Thirdly, The Dissenters call them significant teaching signs, and bring that as an Argument against them, but do we teach God or Man, surely Man is fit for Instruction. And as to Addition, the Curse is equally against diminishing, as adding: But the Love-kiss, *Signaculum reconciliationis*; Washing the Disciples Feet a token of Humility; The Feasts of Charity mention'd at the Sacrament by *St. Jude*; the Community of Goods, the Deaconesses, &c. Things of this Nature are not of the substance of the Word, or the Ordinances, but are Circumstantial, and may be changed, added, or taken away safely. I could cite too an Eminent Nonconformist, where he saith, it cannot be called an Addition in Scripture sense, unless the Governours stamp Holyness upon it, or Necessity, as a necessary Duty, Doctrinal Necessity he means: Or unless by adding they mean, giving the same Efficacy to Humane Institutions as God doth to his, by making them to confer Grace upon the rightly disposed; and by diminishing that the Service is not compleat without it. I shall conclude with

with a saying of Mr. Calvin, *Let not any think me so austere or bound up, as to forbid a Christian to accommodate himself to the Papists, in any Ceremony or Observance; For it is not my purpose to condemn any thing, but what is clearly Evil, and openly Vicious.* I have said thus much, lest some that are uncharitable to our Church should think, I wrote, Because I was pinched, and could not tell how to satisfy my Conscience in Conformity.

Dr. Moore's Mystery of Godliness, Pref. Sect. 10. The Cross, so seasonable at the first Institution of it, while professed Pagans, were mingled among Christians, and so significant alwayes, that if the Church cannot make such an Additional as this (in his Judgment) she can make none at all.

True State of Prim. Christ. p. 18; I will name another Ceremony, which gives great offence with greater reason; the bowing towards the Altar, which in my own Judgment I allow, and practise in some measure, when I come into such Congregations as generally use it, avoiding still to give offence to any, as far as I may with safe Conscience. I affirm it is a very fitting thing to shew Reverence in the House of God, and to shew it by bowing as well as any other means, and to bow that way, to the East as well as any other way: Bowing towards the Altar is grown into abuse, by the Papists supposing Christ to be Corporally present there. With us the Minister bows to shew some particular Reverence in that place, where the Blessed Sacrament is Consecrated. Let this pass for good, though something also may be said against it.

Ceremonies not to be Innovated or Multiplied.

Bishop Taylor's *Ductor Dubit.* L. 3. Ch. 4. Rule 4. Sect. 19, 20. That this Rule of Order and Decency is not to be extended to such Decencies as are only Ornament, but is to be limited to such as only rescue from Confusion; the reason is, because the Prelates and Spiritual

Spiritual Guides cannot do their Duty, unless things be so orderly, as that there be no Confusion, but if it can go beyond this Limit, then it can have no Natural Limit, but may extend to Sumptuousness, to Ornament for Churches, to rich Utensils, &c. But because this is too subject to abuse, and gives a Secular Power over Mens Estates; and is not any part of Spiritual Government, it's more than Christ gave to Ministers. *Id. Rules to his Clergy.* 39. R. Let no Minister of a Parish introduce any Beremony, Rites or Gestures, though with some seeming Piety and Devotion, but whar are commanded by the Church, and Established by Law, and let these also be wisely and usefully Explicated to the People, that they may understand the Reasons and Measures of Obedience, but let there be no more introduced, lest the People be burthened unnecessarily, and tempted, or divided; *Id. 40. R.*

Idem, And though significant Ceremonies may be for Edification, yet it is to be considered, whether the introducing of such things does not destroy the Church, not only in her Christian Liberty, but in the Simplicity and Purity, and Spirituality of her Religion, by intently changing it into a Ceremonial and External Service; *Id. 41. R.*

True State of the Primitive Church, p. 18. With us the Minister bows at the Altar, to shew some particular Reverence in that place, where the Blessed Sacrament is Consecrated; though something may be said against that: Yet I pray tell me, Why the Reader passing from one side of the Church to the other; and the Minister passing from one end of the Altar to the other, bows again. I verily believe 'tis merely a causeless Custom taken up one from another, (the common beginning of all Superstitions) having no reason for it, but much against it, giving thereby great scandal to weak ones, and ground of slander to malicious ones, who lay hold on any occasions to accuse them of Papistry. For certainly it is done with little or no Reason, or with a great deal of Superstition.

Serious and Compassionate Enquiry, &c. To do all that I may without danger to my self, and not at all to regard what others can comply with; or to use my own Liberty to the offence of others, is to be Unchristian and Uncharitable. And in this sense only are we to understand all the Discourses of the Apostle about Scandal and Offence, where there is *Libertas libera*. For he that will provoke his Brother to sin, by do-
ing

ing that which he may omit without sin, is guilty of sin in so doing. *It. p. 245.* To the end that we may prevail with them to deny themselves in somethings for the Publick Good, we should do well to give them Examples of our own Self-denyal, and abridging our own Liberty, in Condescension to them in such things as are not the matter of the Law; and that we will not out-run the Laws, to contradict and vex them, in what we may forbear without sin.

Doctor Barrow's Sermons of Love, p. 181. An Act of Charity to abstain from any thing, which either may occasion him to commit Sin, or disaffect him to Religion, or discourage him in the practice of Duty, or which any wise may discompose, vex, or grieve him, (the Apostle having said) *That if thy Brother be not grieved with thy Meat, now walkest thou not Charitably, Rom. 14. 15.*

Having premised somewhat in Defence of the Ceremonies, and against Innovations &c. I shall proceed to those

Arguments for leaving the Use of the Ceremonies Indifferent.

ARGUMENT I.

Consider first, That by leaving the Ceremonies Indifferent, Conformists have their Liberty allowed them to use them. Where Ministers scruple the use of that sign of the Cross, but the Parents are for it, they may get any Neighbouring Minister that is of the same Opinion to Baptize their Child after their manner. If their Parents be against it, the Minister holding it but a thing indifferent, why may he not forbear the use of it for satisfaction of the Parents?

H. I do not read of any that lived and dyed Nonconformists, but scrupled the Sign of the Cross, which shows they are not satisfied in Conscience about it: But our Consciences will bear the yielding of it up for Peace, because we hold Ceremonies to be *adiaphora*, things Indifferent, in themselves neither good nor evil. If indifferent, let us not contend so earnestly for their use, as for necessary things, and matters of Faith, but manifest an indifferency for their Continuance, or Abrogation.

III. The Ceremonies are *inutilia Cælo*, of little or no use for the winning of Souls; and I see not but that Prelates Speech was truly Christian, who said we had rather lose a Ceremony than a Soul. As it was said of some Meats, neither if we eat them, are we the better, nor if we eat not, are we the worse; so we are nothing better'd by these Ceremonies. Indifferent things have no Spiritual Vertue or Efficacy in them. We do not hold with the Papists that Surplices, be-
ing

ing hallowed defend him that wears them from the Devil. And Canon Thirty, saith, that the Sign of the Cross doth neither add any thing to the Vertue and Perfection of Baptism: Nor being omitted, doth detract any thing from the Effect and Substance of it.

IV. The Reason for the first use of the Ceremonies ceaseth much. They were kept, partly out of Compliance with the Papists, to gain upon them, because the People could not be so wholly drawn off from the use of the Sign of the Cross; and somewhat too out of Compliance with the Primitive Christians, who used the Sign of the Cross often, and very early after the Apostles dayes, as *Justin Martyr* saith, *in foro, in agris*. And thus the Church of *England* shewed she left the Church of *Rome* only in her Innovations, and would go along with her in what the Ancient Church practised, that she might be the more inexcusable, and justly condemned, if she rejected Communion with us. But now the case is altered, the Papists are hardened by it, and encouraged, upbraiding us (as Bishop *Usher* said of them) If your Flesh be not good, why do you drink of our Broth? But our Protestant Brethren stumble at it, and it is disused by other Reformed Churches; and therefore in condescension to the weakness of the one, and Uniformity with the other Reformed Churches, perhaps it were to be wished that now the use of it were forborn.

V. Against the Imposition of the Ceremonies is because of the many Objections against them, especially against the Cross, as a significant Ceremony, not instituted by Christ; as a Dedicating Covenanting Sign; as a Sacramental Sign, or as having the semblance of a Sacrament, or against the use of it in that place immediately after Baptism, and the Duties of the Baptized more expressly affixed to that Sign, than to the Sacrament it self; as a *medium cultus*. Again, as Superstitious and Scandalous, because of the Popish abuse of it; as a cursed Addition to the Word of God, and the Sacrament of Baptism; as imposed on Ministers and Children of those Parents that scruple, and are not satisfied in Conscience about the use of it, as well as those that are; as the Likeness and Image of Christ Crucified; forbidden say they in the Second Commandment; as wilt Worship, as disused in other Protestant Churches; as against Christian Liberty, as unsuitable to the simplicity of the Gospel, as needless, unprofitable, and causing Divisions in the Church. Although none of the Objections, or Arguments

ments that I can find against it, convince me that the submission to it, and the use of it is utterly unlawful, yet it should seem inconvenient to continue a thing which hath so plausible and numerous Objections against it.

VI. For making some allowances in respect of the Ceremonies ; God himself dispenseth with his own Commands about Rituals, or smaller matters in case of necessity, or when great good or hurt stands on the other side to outweigh them. 1 Sam. 21. 6. David in his hunger eats the Shewbread, which only the Priests were to eat, and Christ on the same account lets the Disciples pluck and rub the ears of Corn on the Sabbath-day, 1 Kings 8. 64. Solomon hallows the middle of the Court for an Altar, because the Brazen Alrar of the Lord was too little for the Offerings. A multitude did eat the Passover otherwise than appointed, 2 Chron 30. 18. on the Second Moneth ; for they could not keep it at the time appointed, as the Second and Third Verses. An Ox or an Ass is to be watered, or pulled out of a Pit on the Sabbath day : *Periculum vite dissolvit Sabbatum*, (as the Proverb says) though by many good Men, a matter of Controversie, or thought to be Moral and not Ceremonial. Surely then lesser matters upon great and weighty Occasions, when Spiritually necessary for the Churches Good and Peace, and for the Labours of able Men in the Work of the Ministry, may very well be dispensed with. For Humane Ceremonies cannot pretend to a like Authority, or Necessity, much less a greater than those of Divine appointment.

That Ceremonies must yield to substance.

Bam. Aſew, Or, King James I. Instructions to his Son, p. 15. Learn wisely to discern between points of Salvation and indifferent things, betwixt Substance and Ceremonies : As for the latter spare not to use, or alter them, as the necessity of the Times shall require.

Bishop Halls Works, p. 1092. Our Saviour justifies the act of *Abimelechs* giving David Holy Bread and the Sword : Ceremonies must give place to Substance ; God will have Mercy and not Sacrifice : Charity is the summe and the end of the Law ; that must be aimed at in all our actions.

Bishop

Bishop Taylors Duct. Dubit. p. 735. Thus if a Church commands such Ceremonies to be used, such Orders, such Prayers, they are to be observed when they may; but if I fall into the hands of an enemy to that manner of Worship, who will kill, or afflict me greatly for using it, I am in that case disobliged, [even as *Periculum vitæ dissolvit Sabbatum*].

Serious and Compassionate Enquiry, p. 159. On *David's* eating the Shew-bread; It is sufficiently intimated, that God doth not only prefer Moral acts before Ceremonial, but also doth make great allowances, limitations and exceptions in the one case and not in the other: For it is as if our Saviour had said; Had you censorious Pharisees understood either God or Religion, you would have known that so long as there is not Contumacy and Contempt in the neglect of those Rituals, but the excuse of a just necessity, or the Rational Consideration of a greater good to preponderate the omission, God doth not impute it for a sin.

Bishop Saunderson on Rom. 3. 8. *Sect.* 31. Affirmative Duties do not obligare ad semper (as being many it is impossible they should.) And many times Duties otherwise necessary, in case of Superiour Reason and Duties, do cease to be necessary *pro hic & nunc*; and then to omit them is not to do evil.

Bishop Wilkins, p. 413, 414. Now Divine Laws themselves are capable of relaxation, which is the meaning of that Proverbial saying so frequent in Scripture, That God will have Mercy and not Sacrifice; and therefore much more will Humane Laws admit it.

True state of the Primitive Church. As to Ceremonies, I wonder men of any tolerable discretion should be so eager either for or against them, our Salvation no ways depending on them, but much hazarded by our contentions about them, breaking Peace, the principal thing recommended to us by the Gospel of Peace.

VIII. Another Argument for Concessions in the Ceremonies; several of our Eminent Men in Queen *Elizabeth's* Reign were for the taking of them away, as their Letters to *Bullinger* inform us, mentioned by the Bishop of *Salisbury* in his Travels; Letters of things remarkable in *Switzerland*, &c. by Dr. *Burnet* Bishop of *Salisbury*, tell us, that there is a vast Collection of Letters at *Zurich*, written either to *Bullinger* or by him. Bishop *Jewel* in a Letter, Feb. 8. 1566. wishes that the Vestments together with all the other Remnants of Popery, might be thrown both out of their Churches, and out of the minds

of the People, and laments the Queens fixedness to them : So that she would suffer no change to be made. And in *JANUARY* the same year, *Sand's* Archbishop of York writes, *Contentum de Pessimum Passifici utendis vel non utendis, dabit Deus his quoque finem.*

Horn Bishop of Winchester, in a Letter, *July 16. 1555.* He writes of the Act concerning the Habits with great regret; and expresses some hopes that it might be Repealed next Session of Parliament, if the Popish Party did not hinder it; and he seems to stand in doubt, whether he should Conform himself to it or not, upon which he desires *Bullinger's* advice. And in many Letters writ on that Subject, it is asserted, that both *Cranmer* and *Ridley* intended to procure an Act for abolishing the Habits, and that they only defended their Lawfulness, but not their fitness, and therefore they blamed private petitions that refused to obey the Laws.

Bishop Grindal in a Letter, *Aug. 27. 1556.* writes, that all the Bishops, who had been beyond Sea, had at their return dealt with the Queen to let the matter of the Habits fall; but she continued inflexible. He laments the ill effects of the opposition that some had made to them, which had extremely irritated the Queens Spirit. *Cox* Bishop of Ely laments the aversion that they found in the Parliament to all the Propositions that were made for the Reformation of abuses.

Peter Martyr to Bishop Hooper; At first I conceived no small joy of your singular and earnest study, in that you put your endeavour that Christ his Religion may be brought again unto a chaste and simple Purity. For what should be more desired of all Godly hearts, then that all things by little and little should be clean taken away, and cut off, which have very little or nothing in them that can be referred wholly to Edification, but rather be judged of the Godly to be superfluous.

Homily of Fasting, Part 1. p. 172, 173. Edit. 1673. Gods Church ought not, neither may it be so tyed to that, (i. e. Fasting) or any other Order now made, or hereafter to be made and devised by the Authority of Man, but that it may Lawfully for just causes, alter, change or mitigate those Ecclesiastical Decrees and Orders; yea, recede wholly from them, and break them, when they tend either to Superstition and Impiety, when they draw people from God, rather than work any edification in them. This Authority to mitigate Laws and Decrees Ecclesiastical the Apostles practised, signifying *Act. 15.* they would not lay any other burden upon them than these necessities.

King

Lord Bacon in his Considerat. Dedicat. to K. James I. For the Cap and Surplice; since they be things in their nature indifferent, and yet by some held Superstitious; and that the Question is between Science and Conscience, it seemeth to fall within the compass of the Apostles Rule, which is that the stronger descend and yield to the weaker, only the difference is, that it will be materially said, that the Rule holds between a private man and a private man, and not between the Conscience of a private man and the order of a Church. But yet sith the Question at this time is of a Toleration, not by connivance, which may encourage disobedience, but by Law which may give a Liberty; it is good again to be advised, whether it fall not within the equity of the former Rule? And for subscription it seemeth to be in the nature of a Confession, and therefore proper to bind in the unity of Faith, and to be urged rather for Articles of Doctrine, than for Rites and Ceremonies, and points of outward concernment. For howsoever Politick Considerations and Reasons of State may require Uniformity, yet Christian and Divine grounds look chiefly upon Unity.

Dr. Edw. Bulkleys Apol. for the Religion Established, Edit. 1608. p. 112. Touching the use of Surplices, Organs, &c. in Divine Service; I say that men may differ in Opinions of these things, and agree in unity of Faith and Knowledge of the Son of God.

Doctor Fuller in his Appeal of injured Innocence, in defence of his *Church History*; Multiformity in things meerly indifferent with mutual Charity, doth more promote Gods Glory then Uniformity it self.

Doctor Mores Mystery of Godliness, Sect. 10. Pref. About the Communion; I confels an Uniformity would look better in outward shew, but is not worth the least stir and violence in diversities of Actions, or rather circumstances interpretable to so good a meaning, as either Kneeling or Sitting at the Communion is; and the real exercise of Charity in leaving every one free is every whit as suitable to this solemn performance, as the most exquisite Uniformity, if devoid of the Spirit of Meekness, and mutual forbearance. *Item*, *To the same purpose about the Cross*: Unity of Hearts being better than Uniformity in Actions indifferent, there ought to be no breach nor quarrel about these things: By an high value of the indispenables of Christianity, and of the tender regard to the Consciences of men, the Minister will conciliate more authority to himself, than if he drew too hard to an uniform compliance in things where Christ hath left us free.

True state of the Primitive Church, p. 20. Let us be men of understanding, men in Devotion, be zealous, and hold fast the substantial parts of Religion, and let us leave it to Women and Children to contend about Ceremonies. Let it be indifferent to us, whether this or that, or no Ceremony, whether Kneel or not Kneel, Bow or not Bow, Surplice or no Surplice, Cross or no Cross, Ring or no Ring. Let us give Glory to God in all, and no offence to our Brethren in any thing.

Doctor Stillingfleets Irenicum, p. 65. He must be a great stranger in the Primitive Church, that takes not notice of the great diversity of Rites and Customs used in particular Churches, without censuring of those that differ'd from them ; or if any by inconsiderate Zeal did proceed so far, how ill it was represented by other Christians. And he concludes with that *Divine Aphorism* of St. Austin ; *Indignum est ut propter ea qua nos Deo neque digniores*, &c. It is an unworthy thing for Christians to condemn and judge one another for those things which do not commend us unto God. To the same purpose in *Unreasonableness of Separation*, That the Cross be left at liberty, as the Parents desire it, or wholly taken away, *Pres. p. 83. Edit. 3.*

King Charles II. Declaration at Breda : Agreed to leave the Ceremonies at liberty.

Dr. Rudde Bishop of St. Davids Speech in the Convocation, 1604. In the life time of the late Archbishop (then *Whitgift*) these things were not so extreemly urged, but that many Learned Preachers enjoyed their Liberty therein conditionally, that they did not by word nor deed disgrace or disturb the State established.—

King Charles II. Declaration from Breda. None shall be denied the Lords Supper for not Kneeling ; none compelled to use the Cross ; it shall be Lawful to him that desires to use the Cross, to have such Ministers as will use it ; and if the proper Minister refuse, to get another. None compell'd to bow at the name of Jesus. The Surplice left to liberty, except in the Royal Chappel, Cathedrals, and Universities.

Another *Argument*. The mischief to the Church hath been very great from these Ceremonies, especially from the Cross.

First as to the Imposition ; though the present Fathers of the Church have signified their consent unto a due liberty to Dissenters, and some Indulgence to them beyond their Predecessors ; yet several Ministers in Queen *Elizabeths*, and King *James I. Reign*, and that of King *Charles I.* and at King *Charles II.* Return, have been turned out of

their Benefices, and silenced for Nonconformity to these Ceremonies, although the Church of *England* confesseth them to be but things indifferent. And it were hard, for refusing upon a Conscientious account to submit to things indifferent, to have one of the greatest punishments inflicted on a man, Suspension and Deprivation; even as Conformists would (many of them) think it hard to be Silenced for not assenting to the Perseverance of the Saints, or any other of the five points, according to the common sense or notion of our Dissenting Brethren.

Secondly, These Ceremonies have been as it were a bone of Contention, thrown in between Conformists and Nonconformists. *Zanbichs* Letter to Queen *Elizabeth* 1571. tells her; This Counsel about strict Imposition of Ceremonies will trouble the publick Peace of the Church, by causing contentions among men, and cause them to write Books one against another about things indifferent, which are the Golden Apples of Contention. Many an hot Dispute and Conference there hath been, and Books wrote for and against them with bitterness of Spirit; some contending as earnestly about these indifferent things, as about matters of Faith; as if the very Life and Soul of Religion lay in them, and as if the cause of Christ and our Protestant Reformation were to stand or fall with them. The Ceremony of the Cross hath been as vexatious to our Church, as ever the difference about the Jewish Ceremonies of Days and Meats was in the time of the Apostles, which occasioned a Council at *Jerusalem*, *Acts* 15. so many Chapters in *St. Pauls* Epistle, and such contention among them.

Thirdly, Much time hath been spent to little purpose or profit in Reading or Studying these matters. Oh the many that have wrote for and against! No little time doth it cost men in Writing, as Bishop *Mourton*, Dr. *Bourges* for; Dr. *Ames* against them and others; nay, every Book for or against Conformity, (as God knows there are abundance of them upon these fruitless Controversies) makes the Ceremonies *materiall contentions* matter of the Controversie, and it calleth for a part and a considerable share in the Book. Time also spent in Reading and Studying the point; and there must be Prayer to be led by the Spirit to find out the Truth for satisfaction. The time also which is spent in Preaching on this point, for it is commanded in the *Canons*: Ifay this time would be much better spent in reading the Bible, with Comments or Treatises of Divinity, and so be Redeemed for Eternity, which now men are necessitated to spend for satisfaction herein.

All

All this, a great deal, or a considerable portion of time may be better improved, if this Ceremony be taken away. And then as my Lord *Bacon's Essays*, p. 13. *Speaking of Peace in the Church*; It turneth the labours of Writing and Reading Controversies into Treatises of Mor-tification and Devotion.

Again, The strict exaction of these Ceremonies hath occasioned some to cry them up, as if a considerable part of Ministers Conformity to the Laws of God and Man lay therein, when in truth it is a very inconsiderable part. And some have sought to get into favour with greater Persons, and attain Preferment by a niceness and strict observance of every Punctilio about the Ceremonies, exacting perhaps a more strict Obedience to these than to the Laws of God. And he shall pass for an obedient and very good Son of the Church with some, that is a zealous stickler for these, though he be loose in his Life, formal in his Religion, and uncharitable to those that differ from him.

Again, Some have declared that they cannot joyn with as in Baptism, suffering their Children to be Baptized by Conforming Ministers, because of the Sign of the Cross which they in their Consciences cannot allow of; nor joyn in the Lords Supper because of Kneeling, which seems to them (though through great weakness, and a more unreasonable prejudice, when the Rubrick is so expressly against the Idolatry and Adoration of the Sacramental Bread) a symbolizing with Idolaters, which things have bred no small perplexity of mind and outward trouble to some Godly Persons; said Mr. *Spring* in his days, *Cass. Anglie*.

I shall conclude this with Dr. *Preston on the Lords Prayer*, p. 89. *Thy Kingdom come*. We intreat the Lord that he would curse and cross all Antichristian Plots and Practices; and we are to Pray against allers and stumbling blocks that would hinder the proceedings of the Gospel; that he would abandon all things that do offend, even all Rethmans and Reliques of Superstition, and such Ceremonies as do but ensnare the Consciences of men, and draw a great many into Persecution and Trouble.

A Second Mischief to the Church hath been great in respect of Conformists blind submission to this Ceremony. One not long before I entered into the Ministry, and who lived in the same Parish where Providence placed me afterwards, when Dying lay under great troubles of his Conscience for his Conformity, being bred up a Nonconformist. I have read in Mr. *Springs Cassander Angl. Whinn* of one or two more,

not mentioned by name, as Conforming against their Consciences without sufficient satisfaction, have lamented it at last; as also of others, who have dyed very peaceably and comfortably, satisfied in their Conformity. Some Conformists have certainly run into a wrong defence of this Ceremony, as Dedicating the Child unto the Service of him who dyed upon the Cross, which is done in Baptism: And others have thought it above the peoples capacity. However, they may understand somewhat of what was said before, and that Signing with the Cross is none of their act and deed: Not they, but the Minister that is to wear the Surplice, and to Baptize, and Sign with the Cross. The Minister is concerned to look to that, the Lawfulness of these. And Mr. Baxter (as also Mr. Croftons *Reformation no Separation*, p. 24. Mr. Nyes *Case of great use*, p. 10. Mr. Balls *Tryal of the grounds of Separation*, p. 308. And the Author of a *Discourse of Scandal*;) in his *Christian Directory* among his Cases of Conscience hath resolved it, that Parents dissenting from it may suffer their children to be Signed with the Cross after Baptism, declaring to the Minister in private, or their Neighbours, that it was Baptism only that they desired, and that they disowned the Sign of the Cross, which they held to be unlawful. So that Parents are neither bound to the personal practice of it, nor to the profession of its Lawfulness.

And this appears to have been the Judgment and concurrent Practice of the Nonconformists of former times, who constantly joyned in the Prayers and other Acts of Worship, although they scrupled some Particular Ceremonies. All that we desire is to have the Liberty of our Consciences allowed us in that which is not theirs, but ours to practise. And if there be offence given, it is not from us, (said Dr. Saunderson in his *Treatise of Scandal*;) or at least not so much (in the present case of the Church) there being a necessity laid upon us as to the use of it, if our Consciences be satisfied therein: So that whatever we would do, if it were left to our Liberty to use or forbear it, since we are not allowed to exercise our Ministry otherwise than upon Conformity to it, it is Prudentially good, and Spiritually necessary for us to Conform to it, even in the Judgment of the Reformed Churches abroad, Geneva, as Beza, Colladonus, Goulartius, Franciscus Porti, Henricus Stephanus declared in a Letter sent to the Brethren in England, that were unsatisfied in their Conformity to this Ceremony, and desired to know their Judgment. And so have the late Ministers in France, as Mr. Daille, Mr. Claud, Mr. De L'Angle tells

tells us in his Letter; My Opinion in this matter is the same that is held by our Churches. Mr. *Cotton* seemed to look upon it as tolerable, and to be born with, *Zany* and others, though they did not fully approve of the Imposition.

III. *Mischief*, In respect of the censoriousness of some Separatists, inveighing against these Ceremonies as Limbs of Antichrist, reliques of Popery, Additions, Superstitious, will Worship, &c. as before in the Objections against them, condemning (as my Lord *Hales* in his Discourse of Religion calls them) these blameless Ceremonies as confidently, as if they were infallibly assured of their unlawfulness, reviling and censuring the Men that use them, as if he could not be a good Man that submitteth to the Ceremonies, but must needs conform to them against his Conscience out of Compliance with the Government, and for his Preferment sake. It is hard for Ministers who submit to these things according to their Consciences, though it be with great Charity and Moderation to those that differ from them, to be termed Time-servers, Formalists, Luke-warm, Men wanting the Power of Godliness, as some conceited Persons, who have more Heat than Light, more Zeal than Knowledge, do not stick to affirm. Sure this becometh not Christian Charity, in 1 Cor. 13. 4. Charity vaunteth not it self, is not puffed up (with a conceit of its own Judgment, as if it were infallible, and they must needs be in the right.) Again Charity thinketh no Evil, and doth not behave it self unseemly. But surely if we judge of their thinking by their evil speaking, and unseemly deportment towards their Governours, and others, there must be an abundance of censoriousness in the Heart; *For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.* In 2 Pet. 2. 12. You there read of those that speak evil of things they understand not, applicable to these Men. Mr. *Baxter* saith thus in his Book of *Church-Government*; Of all our Ceremonies there is none that I have suspected more to be simply unlawful than the Cross, yet dare not I peremptorily say, that it is unlawful; nor will I condemn either Ancients or Moderns that use it; nor will I make any disturbance in the Church about it, any farther than my own forbearance of it. And those Grave Men at the Grand Debate; it being doubtful whether God hath given Men power to institute such Mystical Teaching Signs, as being not necessary in general, fall not under the particular Rules, &c. They are by some held sinful and unlawful in themselves, [by some not as of another Judgment it seems] by others very inconvenient, and unsuitable to the simplicity of the Gospel-Worship, &c. p. 9. Of the Grand De-

base. But the new Generation of Dissenters are grown wiser than the Grave, Aged, and Judicious (that speak more modestly, leaving the lawfulness of it as doubtful and *sub Judice*) and seem to wonder at those before them, that they should see no farther, not to the utter unlawfulness of these Ceremonies, and some of the Prayers too, which they say, they see as clear as the Light to be Popish and Antichristian, and against Scripture. I profess that the Objections are so many, and the ill Circumstances that attend its use at present, that after all I dare not be positive and peremptory that it is lawful; nor will I be over-confident; charitably allowing my Brethren their Liberty to dissent, and desiring the like Charity from them, as to my own Conformity upon prevailing probable Arguments, leaving it to God who only is Infallible, to decide the Case at the day of Judgment: Where I trust his Mercy will pardon me if I have erred, as having sought for the Spirit to guide me into Truth, and as having also the Ancient Church, and the Modern Reformed Foreign Divines approbation of Conformity thereto.

It is from the strict and severe Imposition, the blind submission of others, not being able to give any tolerable account of it to their People, nor Answer Objections against it. And from the censoriousness, and ill Names that have been given this Ceremony of the Cross, that they have brought such an Odium upon it, and wrought such an ill Opinion in our Conforming People against it. Further they hate Popery, and Papists use this so much, and abuse it to Idolatry and Superstition, that they hate and disgust the use of it upon that account. I know our Governours never intended to make us Odious in the Eyes of the People, but I am sure there could scarce be a more effectual way and means to do it, than by enjoying these things so strictly, the which People are so much set against, that they disaffect those that use them; and the Governours that impose them even against the gust of the Congregation. If there had not been a little of the old grudge in some at the Grand Debate, sure they had been yielded up then, and not have remained unto this day troubling the peace of the Church.

I must conclude with the common Assertion of the Reformed Churches. That all Churches should labour as much as possible, may be, after Apostolical simplicity, and fewness of Ceremonies, which they judge the safest, the purest, and the best, as *Peter Martyr*, *Bucer*, *Calvin*, *Bene*, *Zanovius*, and indeed almost all good Men amain.

